

a. 4818

A Critical and Philosophical

3 La

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

*Causes of Prodigies and Miracles,
as related by Historians.*

WITH

An ESSAY towards restoring a
Method and Purity in HISTORY.

In Which,

The *Characters* of the most celebrated
WRITERS of every Age, and of the
several Stages and Species of History,
are occasionally criticized and explained.

William In Two PARTS. *Warburton*

*Disce, sed Ira cadat Naso, rugosaq; Sanna,
Dum veteres Avias tibi de Pulmone revello.*

Perf.

L O N D O N :

Printed for THOMAS CORBETT, at
Addison's-Head, without Temple-Bar.

M.DCC.XXVII.

21





T O

The Right HONOURABLE

Sir Robert Sutton,

Knight of the Bath ;

A N D

One of His MAJESTY'S Most
Honourable Privy-Council.

S I R,



H E wise and learned
Bacon assures us, that *the*
putting a Stop to Dedi-
cations, may be justly placed
amongst the *Advancements of*
Learning. And, against this ge-

A 2

neral

neral Practice, opposes the Example of the mighty Ancients, who bravely stood their Ground alone, or only chose a *Second* from amongst their Friends and Equals. The most effectual Attonement to dishonoured Letters, being, in his Opinion, to wipe out the very Memory of a Composition, so long defiled by the grossest Adulation. But whatever Advantages of Reputation this Expedient might procure to Learning, its Interests, I am afraid, as Things now stand, wou'd be injuriously affected by it. For the ancient Writers, whose Practice is here recommended to us, were in Circumstances so widely different from ours, that we cannot justly be
accused

Dedication.

v

accused of Presumption, or Weakness, for striking out into a new and commodious Road, which our great Masters neither saw nor wanted. Their Learning flourish'd only in Republics; and by Reason of the Expence of Manuscripts, then the only Conveyance of it, was engrossed by the principal Citizens: Dedications therefore, when used, must run necessarily on a Level. At the new Birth of Learning, in our Western World, the Nobility indeed became fond and ambitious of it, as a Novelty and *sounding Distinction*. But this ill-grounded Ardour abating, they soon grew weary of the familiarized Stranger. Whether or no their ordinary Caprice, in Matters of

A 3

Mode,

Mode, prevailed here, and when they cou'd not keep it to themselves, they dropt it, like a spread Fashion; for now the Invention of Printing had made it a Purchase for the Vulgar; or whatever else was the Reason, Learning was soon forced upon her new Acquaintance, *Poverty*; and at length became the lean Inheritance of a distress'd and ruinous Fraternity; which, like the younger Branches of a noble Stock, wou'd naturally incline towards the Great, as to the Elder House, for Protection and Support.

Their Pretensions at first, as befitted, were modest enough; and while they fairly pleaded a
literary

literary Descent from the same common Ancestors, these thought the Honour of the Family somewhat concerned in the Fortunes of the unhappy Suppliants. And had the *Genius of Learning* been then so watchful o'er its Charge, as to convert their dying Ardour for the Profession of Letters, into a fresh and more lasting Flame, for the Protection of them, perhaps, the World had been no Loser by the Change.

But, alas ! a fatal Depravation of Manners came on apace. The Patron grew ashamed of Virtue, and so, indifferent to Praise ; and the Client, now hopeless of Independence, was easily reconciled to Slavery. He forgot the Dignity

nity of his Descent. He prophaned his Incense, sacred to the Wise and Virtuous, by offering it to any upstart Idol of the Streets : And at length fell so low into Misery and Wretchedness, as not to be allowed the Honour of a *Public Prostitution*, till he had got the previous Indulgence for his Shame *in private*.

For now certain Impostors had mixed themselves amongst the Learned. These were a kind of *Parasites*, who, like their Ancestor in *Terence*, were for refining upon their Profession ; and from Nature's Designation of *simple Buffoons*, had improved themselves into *Dedicators* : Yet this
Coalition

Coalition was not thought altogether monstrous. The *Parasite* having as noble an Original, and suffering as base a Degeneracy, as the *Dedicator*. For the *Parasite*, as the *Dedicator*, was, at first, a *Name of Honour*. He was, as *Athenæus* informs us, of the Chief of the City. He presided in the Sacrifices of the *Demi-gods*, and sung the Praises of the *Heroes*. For Lucretius too, he prostituted his Office; and being now despised and poor, turned Sycophant and Flatterer for a Dinner.

But I forget, that however deformed Panegyric may have grown of late in *Dedications*, yet to find Satire there, will be esteemed

ed altogether monstrous. Besides, Sir, you will easily believe that it is not my Design to decry their Use, but to restore their Reputation; which can be only done by joining again, what has been so long and unhappily separated; true Virtue and honest Praise. And tho' I be so rigid to my self, as to be content only with a *Character like yours*, yet I would not be thought to condemn in another, the Choice of one, *less exact*. Let but it arise from the solid Foundation of true Greatness, and we have no Reason to be displeased at the Frontispiece, tho' embellished with the Luxury of Art and Fancy. But to raise an enchanted Palace out of a sick Brain, or stinking Vapour, must create
our

our Pity or Detestation. For as in optical Amusements we call the Glass that enlarges, a good one, because it helps us to survey the Beauty of the Object *with more Exactness* : So in describing the Virtues of a great Mind, and tracing out the benign Influences of a moral Constellation, 'tis allowed to display and heighten the bright Side of each glowing Virtue ; and strive to reconcile any cross Appearance of an excentric Motion. But if by a pitiful Flaw in the grinding, this Glass pretends to discover Stars and Galaxys, in the *unlightened* Part of Heaven, we laugh at the Artist, and throw aside the lying Intelligence. For Example, the *Roman* that had called

called *Catiline's* factious Popularity, public Spirit; or *Anthony's* beastly Luxury, Munificence, had sinned against his Country Virtues; while the candid and humane *Atticus* had been excused, when speaking of *Cæsar*, who had Ambition, without Pride or Vanity; of *Cato*, who had Pride, without Vanity or Ambition; of *Cicero*, who had Vanity, without Ambition or Pride; he had called the *First's* Ambition, the Love of Glory, because joined with Clemency; the *Second's* Pride, an honest Scorn, because arising from the Enmity of Vice; and the *Third's* Vanity, a conscious Merit, because never sparing in another's Praise.

But

But be not, Sir, apprehensive, that now I have got these *great Names* at this Advantage, that I intend to make the *common Use* of them, and raise you *needless Trophies* upon their Dishonour. My Devotions are less superstitiously directed; and I know you detest so *blind and barbarous a Sacrifice*. They were brave Citizens, whom all the *Roman Virtues* conspired to adorn. As to revive the *Old-English Manners*, is your Glory; of which your ancient and noble House has not only produced great Examples, but, (what is its highest Felicity) has conveyed down to you, with undiminished Vigour, the same virtuous Spirit that produced them.

B

Nor

Nor are the *British Manners* of so suspicious an *Alloy*, as to need any foreign *Standard* to ascertain their Value. Nor have you so faintly or imperfectly transcribed them, that there shou'd want a Gloss or Comment to make them understood. For genuine Virtue, like pure Light, is seen thro' no Medium, but its own. To describe it to the clear-sighted, is needless; to weak Eyes, *offensive*; and to the blind Many, impossible.

All that I can do, is recalling your indebted Country to the fresh Memory of your public Services. Where revered by your Fellow-Citizens, admired by Foreigners, and beloved by
mighty

mighty Princes, you purchased the most glorious of all civil Titles, even that of A TRUE ENGLISHMAN. We saw you from afar, by the most refined Dexterity, subdue the mutual Rage of warring Empires. Then shaken *Europe* demanded your Assistance. You heard, you went, Commerce revived, scandalized Religion raised her Head, and the Blessings of Nations bore you on your Way; but the Enemies of Peace declined the *Congress*. They were enough sensible that the shifting Arts of State craft, and separate Interest, were too unequal a Match for the steady Councils of a determined Breast; where so much Love, joined to so much Know-

ledge of Mankind, gave no Hopes of subduing or evading. Hence greater Toils await you. Your Country hails the Omen; and will now believe that to your filial Piety is reserved, a Share in the last Effort of Civil Wisdom, the Union of discordant Parties.

But the *merited Honours* of Life, are what you have in common with your *illustrious Compatriots*. The perfect, the sincere Enjoyment of it, is a Felicity in which you have few Sharers; except those whom you have made your *Friends*. A fine Writer of the lower Empire, celebrates the greatest Character of his Age, a
PHILOSOPHIC STATESMAN,
for

for still *wearing the Countenance*
of a *private Person*, amidst the
Glories of his public Offices.
This, perhaps, was as high as
Rome, in her last Decays, cou'd
advance her worthiest Sons. Had
the Poet known *Scipio* or *You*,
he had said, that after you had
gained, in your *public Offices*, the
Love and Reverence of remotest
Nations, *with the COUNTENANCES*,
you still preserved the MINDS of
private Citizens. This, Sir, is
your last Effort of Virtue, and
becomes its *Reward*. It fits you
for the full Enjoyment of past
Actions, and present Honours.
It preserves your Glories ever
fresh and springing, and leads you
to Pleasures that are lively, con-
stant, and sincere.

'Tis true, there are some, who not pretending to enter into the exalted Sentiments of Heroic Minds, concerning private Life, wou'd ascribe your Indifference for public Power, to something more interested ; the Charms of *your illustrious Consort*. They hold it impossible, that the Conversation of that most *accomplish'd Lady*, shou'd suffer it self to be disturbed by the most splendid Avocations. But if it must be owned, that here *Inclination* draws on the Results of Reason ; it must likewise be allowed that they are the Virtues of the COUNTESS OF SUNDERLAND, that draw the Bias ; nor can so divine an Union impede the vigorous Progress

gress of the Soul inspired with
Glory. For a *Female Breast* of
so chaste and bright a Polish, is
the truest *Mirroure* wherein to
dress up Heroism. There, *wild*
Ambition is frightened at its own
Deformity ; and *Cunning* betrays
the insipid Mien of Folly ; while
sober Greatness wears a brighter
Splendour ; and *reflected Wis-*
dom a more powerful Address.

But you begin to frown.—
I have, perhaps, too bluntly told
you what the World says of you.
But you must merit less, if you
wou'd not be the publick Talk ;
and be cooler in your Favours, if
you expect I shou'd not take a
Pleasure in repeating their Dis-
course. Besides, Sir, you are
safe

safe from *the Caprice of those common Accidents*, to which hair-brain'd Dedicators so unworthily expose their noble Patrons. For when I speak of your Wisdom, I can never be accessory, (a rare Felicity !) to a Charge against your Conduct ; when of your Integrity, to a Recollection of any past Corruption ; nor will your Candour be construed a Propensity to censure the Actions you had no Share of ; or the Love of your Country a blind Adherence to a Party.

In Truth, the Writer, happy in a generous Patron, and unable to discharge his Obligations ; by publishing them to the World,
gives

gives a kind of Security for the *Debt*, at the same Time that he makes a Boast of his *Credit*.

Tho' now shou'd any malicious Reader enquire into my Pretensions to your Favours, I must ingenuously own, all I know of the Matter is, that *it is the Character of great Minds rather to countenance and esteem those whom they oblige, than those, whom in likelihood, they might be obliged by.*

I shou'd now, Sir, according to form, implore your Protection for the following Sheets, against the *Attacks of Criticism*. But, alas ! those are ill-grounded Expectations ;

pectations ; which sure, by this Time, we might begin to distrust, was it in *Authors* to grow wise at so cheap a Rate, as by a Brother's Experience.

Your great Name can but lift me up to be the more exposed ; while, like young *Euryalus* in the shining Helmet of the *divine Messapus*, my bright Defence but makes me the more obnoxious to Danger ; safe had I been contented in my native Obscurity. *I am,*

S I R,

Your Most Obliged, and

Most Faithful Servant.—

is
f-
w
a

it
-
-
e
-
e
d
e



I

Ca



tha
has
be
H



A Critical and Philosophical

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

*Causes of Prodigies and Miracles,
as related by Historians.*

PART I.



PRODIGES and PORTENTS have infected the best Writings of Antiquity; and have so blotted and deformed our modern Annals, that (with greater Justice than *Polybius* has observ'd it, of the former) they may be rather called TRAGEDIES than HISTORY. How it comes to pass that,
B while

while the *other Sciences* are daily Purging and Refining themselves from the Pollutions of superstitious Error, that had been collecting throughout a long Winter of Ignorance and Barbarism; *History*, still the longer it runs, contracts the more Filth, and retains in it the additional Ordure of every Soil through which it passes: How this happens, I say, is somewhat of difficult Disquisition. If one may be allowed to guess, this seems to be the Reason: In other Sciences, superstitious Errors, having only the Patronage of single Philosophers, or Sects, Men take full Liberty to examine them, and, unrestrained by any Authority that can claim a Sanction from Nature or Religion, take a Pleasure in laying open the Weakness and Folly of unreasonable Opinions. But in *History*, these Things being deliver'd as the Sentiments of whole Nations; or, perhaps, as the Belief of our own brave Ancestors, whose Benefits to Posterity have advanced them to the Rank of Demi-Gods and Heroes; this sanctifies Superstition, keeps us at an awful Distance, restrains our Enquiries, and

and gives Error the Eldership of Reason. The only Cause hitherto assigned, for this strange Attachment of Historians to the *Wonderful*, has been SUPERSTITION, and so unquestioned is this Opinion, that just as the Work is more or less free from that Contagion, the Author, without more ado, is stiled Superstitious, or otherwise.

BUT *Superstition*, though one may allow it a very extended Influence towards this Effect; and might give up the whole Mob of monkish Writers to its Tyranny, won't, I presume, account for so universal a Practice in Men of all Religions, Times, and Temperatures. See TITUS LIVIUS: What discordant Judgments amongst the Criticks concerning him! while one Side pronounces him a *Superstitious*, from his delight in Monsters and Prodigies; the (a) other proves him a *Free-thinker* from the Depth and Extent of his Reflections. But while each

(a) See Toland's *Adeisidæmon*, five T. Livius a *superstitione vindicatus*.

reckons *Superstition* the only Source of this *pestilent Humour*, with what Difficulties are they both beset! For was he *Superstitious*, cou'd he write with that Liberty of Nature and Religion? Was he a *Free-thinker*, wou'd he immortalize the Dotages of the Priests and Rabbles?

No, we must go deeper to reach the Bottom of this Evil; and in exploring the dark Recesses of the *human Mind*, we shall discover these peculiar WEAKNESSES and KNAVERIES that are of themselves sufficient to produce the Effect; and which do, in reality, often share between them this Usurpation over the reasonable Faculties.

I. AND first of its *Weakness*. There is a Flaw, which was certainly in the original Formation of the Mind, that all its Reason could never solder. But it will ever be an Inlet, and most hospitable Harbour of *Imposture*; of which nothing is a more clear and melancholly Proof, than our great Facility in deceiving ourselves,

elves, and our Complaisancy and Constancy in the *Cheat*. To this it is, that an often-vanquished *Error* so resolutely keeps its Ground, and even gains Strength by its Defeat. Compare the Tales of the elder *Pliny* with the *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* of Dr. *Brown*, and you will be surprized to find with what Zeal the sacred Depositum of *Error* has been transmitted from Age to Age, for Two thousand Years together, through all the Changes and Subversions of Religion, Customs and Civil Government: When *Truth*, both Sacred and Prophane, had submitted to the wide-wasting Ravages of Time, still *Error* maintain'd her Empire in her unchang'd antique Garb and Porte: And if haply, by Length of Time, some less considerable *Errors* have been lost, yet have their *imperfect Footsteps* still kept up a kind of Adoration. (b)

B 3

Sur-

(b) Witness that mysterious Title our Quacks often give themselves of the *Unborn Doctor*; which, I believe, has puzzled many to unriddle. I confess, for my own Part, I was very
much

Survey the general History of Truth and Falshood, and see if one has not Reason to question that boasted Prerogative of the former, that *she only receives Strength from Age, while Error dissolves at its Approach*; (c) at least, if we must confess, with the Mythologists, that *Truth is the*

much at a loss, till I recollected the extraordinary Birth of *Æsculapius*, the great Patron of Physic, who, as Story says, was cut from his Mother's Womb. Now, while he was worshipp'd as a God, and his Providence universally acknowledged, it is very natural to suppose, that the *Empiricks* of Antiquity would claim what Relation to him they could; and what carried greater Circumstance along with it, than proclaiming a *Similitude of Birth*. But when poor *Æsculapius* began to be discredited, and his *Inspiration* denied, the *Crafts-men* came, indeed, to be ashamed of professed Relation to him; yet this Silver Shrine was worth Money; and a Veneration was accordingly preserved for it; so that tho' now both *Quack* and *Patient* have forgot the *Religion* of it, they still keep up the old Fondness, for its *Obscurity*, and, as I said above, adore the *Footsteps* of the departed Tradition.

(c) *Opinionum commenta delet dies, nature judicia confirmat.* Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. 2.

Daughter

Daughter of Time, they can't but agree with us, That TIME IS THE SLAVE OF ERROR. Thus is *Deceit* the Darling of the Mind. For was it but *Falshood's* Mask of Veri-Similitude that we doated after, and not some way-ward Charms in her proper Person, could we possibly shew so much Backwardness to an Examination; or treat the officious UNDECEIVER with such Hatred and Outrage?

POSSESSED with this fatal Passion, see the *Multitude* in Crowds falling down before a (d) *Juggler's Box*; and assuredly, did not Modesty restrain them, we should have as open Declarations in Favour of *Church* and *State* Legerdemain; For the Delight we feel when the Artist converts his Cork balls into Apples; and the Admiration, on the Padlock's being invisibly clapt on the Mouth of the heedless Bystander, (e) will, I dare say, be found to be the self-same Passions, stript

(d) Or, if you will, the new fashionable Hocus Pocus Tricks of the Theatres.

(e) Two usual Tricks shewn to the People.

of

of their Formalities, that engage us in the Cause of *Transubstantiation*, and the divine Right of *Tyranny and Slavery*. This Weakness of the Mind, being, as we observed, an *original* Flaw, we may account it the most extended Cause of this *Historic Timpany*; but the Passion (in reality different) yet, by reason of its Affinity, should be carefully distinguished from *Superstition*. The *original Weakness* I speak of, is the common ground to this Passion, and, as Lord Bacon well notes, of *Superstition*, also (f).
But

(f) *De Augm. Scient. l. 2. c. 13. NATURA RERUM omnibus viventibus indidit metum & formidinem, vitæ atque essentiæ suæ conservatricem, ac mala ingruentia vitantem & depellentem, veruntamen EADEM NATURA MODUM TENERE NESCIA EST, sed timoribus salutaribus, semper vanos & inanes admiscet; adeo ut omnia (si intus conspici darentur) Panicis Terroribus plenissima sint; præsertim humana; & maxime omnium, apud vulgum, qui SUPERSTITIONE, (quæ vero nihil aliud quam panicus terror est) in immensum laborat & agitur.* My Reader may observe thus much; that this Part of my Hypothesis, concerning an *original Weakness in human Nature*, and how, it is the Cause of *Superstition*,

tion, is here confirmed : To examine the Particulars in which we differ, would keep me longer than my time will permit. — Here the Note might have ended, had not some terrible Remarks on this Passage engaged my Attention : For if they be just, I am deprived of all the Benefit of the great *Bacon's* Testimony. Then so it is: He is charged by Lord *Shaftsbury*, and by the Author of the *Discourse of Free-thinking*, who is but the *Ape* of that ingenious Nobleman, with broaching a bold Impiety in the above Quotation. See the 3d *Vol.* of the *Charact.* p. 69. and the *Discourse*, &c. p. 169. Lord *Shaftsbury* speaks: " This celebrated Author (*viz. Bacon*) here quoted, by his *Natura rerum* can mean nothing less than the universal dispensing Nature, erring, blindly, in the very first Design, Contrivance, or original Frame of Things, according to the Opinion of *Epicurus* himself, whom this Author (*viz. Bacon*) immediately afterwards cites " with Praise." To the same Purpose his *Admirer*: For after so glaring an Instance of foul-dealing, in a learned, witty and virtuous young Nobleman, it is no wonder that Christianity should receive any Outrage from Men who can imitate him in nothing but in that unhappy Prejudice he had entertained against our holy Religion ; as of the later *Sophists* who affected to be thought Followers of *Plato* and *Aristotle*, some of them could arrive at no higher a Conformity than the Imitation of the *Stammering* of the one, and the *round Shoulders* of the other. As, I believe, it has not been yet done ; I hope my Reader will excuse me from
endea-

endeavouring to vindicate the Great and Religious *Bacon* from the Suspicion of Impiety, in the Place above quoted. 'Tis to be premised then, that the Ancients, besides using the Words *Natura* and *Natura rerum*, ambiguously, and obscurely, in a Sense, of which they had no certain, clear, determined Ideas, which commonly happened; they principally understood by them these two Things: I. *Communis hominum parens*; *Deus ipse*. II. *Quedam vis ingenita*; *vel Causa intima, in rebus universis insita*; something like the *Plastic-nature* of *Dr. Cudworth*. This admits no Doubt. 'Tis plain, then, that *Bacon* was authorized by good *Latin* Writers, to use the Words *Natura rerum*, in the latter Sense. But was this not so, yet 'tis allowed to Writers, Philosophers especially, to use a philosophical Word, in their own peculiar Sense, so they give open Notice of it; and this *Bacon* has done: For being on the Advancement of the several Branches of Science, when he comes to the Mythologic (which was his favourite Contemplation, and in which he has succeeded to Admiration) he explains the Fable of *PAN*, by *NATURE*. *Pan*, says *Bacon*, is *Nature*. *Pan* was begot by *Mercury*, according to the Fable, & *NATURA RERUM* (says *Bacon*) *EX VERBO DIVINO, ORTUM HABET*. See now what a Figure Lord *Shaftsbury* makes with his Assertion, That *Bacon* can mean nothing less than the universal dispensing Nature, erring blindly, &c. according to the Opinion of *Epicurus*. But he cites *Epicurus* with Praise it seems: Agreed; and for a Sentence very deserving of it; yet how little favourable he was

But Superstition is of a later Growth; (g) so tho' Superstition is never without that, that is oft without Superstition. Might I have leave to be a little Speculative, I believe I could entertain my Reader, in shewing him *how* this *Weakness* begets the

was to his Character in general, we may see in this very Discourse concerning *Pan* or Nature, where he says, *Non solum profanum instituere (Epicurum scilicet) sermonem, sed etiam desipere videtur*. I have only this to observe; there is a strange Propensity in Writers, to give the ATHEIST to one another. *Hippocrates* has been accused of Atheism by some Moderns, for speaking magnificently of *Nature*; (see the Treatise, intitled, *Hippocrates Atheismi falso accusatus, contra Gundlingium*) and our great Countryman for speaking disadvantageously of it; perhaps, with equal Justice. For the World, as we said, is very flippant of its Accusations of this Kind: And what, between a narrow Suspicion of the BIGOT, on the one hand, and the Cunning and Ambition of the LIBERTINE, to countenance his Impieties by great Names, on the other, 'tis seldom that a very considerable Writer escapes scot-free.

(g) See this Observation admirably illustrated by *Tacitus*, where he speaks of Prodigies in the declining Reign of *Otho*. — He concludes the Account with ---- & *plura alia*, [*prodigia scilicet*]

the *Love of Falshood*; and at the same time instruct him more fully in my *Hypothesis*.

ADMIRATION, we experience to be one of the most bewitching, enthusiastic Passions of the Mind; and every common Moralist knows, that it arises from NOVELTY and SURPRIZE, the inseparable Attendants of IMPOSTURE: That *Falshood* should be the great Store-house of *Novelty*, won't appear strange to those who consider, that all *Lyes* are of equivocal heterogeneous Birth; no one has its Antitype, but each is a kind of chimerical SPECIES, of itself alone. As to *Surprize* (the other Concomitant of *Falshood*)

scilicet] rudibus seculis, etiam in pace observata, quæ nunc tantum in metu audiuntur; In the rude Ages of Rome, the *Love of Falshood* begot by *Admiration*, drew them to propagate the Beliet of Prodigies: But now *Superstition* was the Cause, which arose from the Distractions of the unsettled State, agreeably to Lord Bacon's Observation in the foregoing Remark, who says, The Vulgar labour with *Superstition*, *Præcipue temporibus duris, & trepidis & adversis*.

the

the Monstruosity arising from those strange capricious Combinations of Ideas, afford sufficient Matter for it: For *Lyes* having no Antitypes in Nature, but put together at the pleasure of the Inventor, must needs have all the various Discordancy that a crazy Imagination, or a crafty Understanding is capable of conceiving. Add to this, the consequential Quality of a dark, mysterious, impenetrable Obscurity; and you see why this Admiration is as durable as it is violent.

BUT TRUTH, (even of a new Discovery) is of much cooler Contemplation; as paying its Court to the Understanding only, by affording a regular View of its simple univocal Original, with the universal Relation, Dependence and Harmony of its Parts. So calm a Prospect often raises no Emotion, or but that of the lowest kind, which we call *Approbation*. Thus the *wondering Egyptian*, after having survey'd the pregnant Globe, on this Side cover'd with springing Harvests, which promise Wealth and Plenty to the near and distant

Continent; and on *That*, disclosing a monstrous Brood of Crocodiles to lay Waste the Fields and Villages; passes over the *Blessing* with a serene Acknowledgment; but follows the *Curse*, with Transport, Worship and Adoration.

BUT not to be over-fond of an Hypothesis, I shan't scruple to confess, that *Truth*, in some Cases, may beget Admiration.

FIRST, *Mathematical Truths*, especially of new invented Theorems, will raise it to a very extraordinary Degree. Witness, that known Story of the old Mathematician, who hit upon a considerable Discovery as he was Bathing, and in an Ecstasy and Transport of Mind, ran Home Naked through the publick Streets. But how observable is it here, that even in a *Truth*, it is its *seeming Conformity to Error*, that produces this Admiration, by the common Way of *Novelty and Surprise*: As when we find the *Ratio* between two Things, (whose Distance makes an exact Comparison

parison appear impossible) by a Medium that seem'd beyond the reach of human Wit to discover or apply.

SECONDLY, a clear and comprehensive View of that amiable Existence, we call VIRTUE, will, for a Time, keep it up to an uncommon Ardour; and here, and in the foregoing Case, (because fixed on Truth) *Admiration* has, perhaps, its Use; the Novice may be hurried by it into the Cause of *Virtue*: But if it so happens, that this Admiration be called off, or disturbed; or, that it falls itself, before *Virtue* has thoroughly made her *Acquaintance*, we soon shift her off, and return back again to our old *Strangeness*.

A REMARKABLE Instance of the first Case, we have in the great Historian *Sallust*. Why I use him here, as well as hereafter, may be seen towards the End of this *Discourse*.

THOSE Critics who have not sufficiently measured the Obliquities of hu-
 C 2 man

man Nature, are much scandalized at what they call an outrageous Affectation in his Behaviour. That a Man of his dissolute Character shou'd have nothing in his Mouth but *Virtus, Virtus*. 'Tis true, that both before and after his thus espousing the Cause of Virtue in his Histories, he ran into violent Excesses, yet was his Conduct at that Juncture very natural.

CONSIDER *Sallust* just expell'd the Senate, and settled in his first Retreat: He had before his Eyes that inexorable Magistracy, which while it remained Supreme, could not relax its Justice in favour of his gross Enormities: This gave him no Prospect of ever returning with Honour to a publick Employment; what could he do, but cast about to make the best Use of his Disgrace. He flatter'd himself to have emerged out of a general Corruption; and having now got firm footing in his Recess; and leisure to breathe and survey the surrounding Dangers; his long neglected Philosophy comes to his Assistance,

stance, and discovers to him the Deformity of *Vice*.

Apparent diræ facies inimicæq; Trojæ. (b)

AND, assisted by the Liveliness of his Genius, employs his *Admiration* on the lovely View of *Virtue*. What Wonder, then, to hear him speak with Passion and Transport of what he was just become enamoured of, and with Harshness and Obloquy of *Vice*, which had so fatally traversed his Pretensions to the Possession of its Rival. But now consider *Sallust* invited by the fortunate (i) *Usurper*, to share with him in his Robberies.

—— *Rursus labefacta cadebat
Virtus.*——

No sooner did the warm Aspect of good Fortune shine out again, but all those exalted Ideas of *Virtue* and *Honour*, raised, like a beautiful kind of Frost-

(b) *Virgil.*

(i) *Cæsar.*

work, in the *cold Season* of Adversity, dissolved and disappeared.

BUT, Secondly, *this Admiration* soon drops of itself, and if *Virtue* has not in the mean time secured her Game, she will be quite thrown out: Yet observe, so unhappy is the Condition of *Humanity*, that we oft find when the *Heat of Admiration* has thoroughly warmed the Fancy, the Impressions remain a long time after; and though *Virtue* and we have been long *Strangers*, yet is the disorder'd Imagination perpetually representing what it felt while that Heat was at the highest; like the Men of *Abdera*, *Lucian* speaks of (k) who, on seeing the *Andromeda* of *Archelaus*, represented in a hot Day, in full Theatre, contracted a feverish Frenzy, with so odd a Crisis, that every one set up for the Deliverer of the distressed *Damocel*, and nothing was seen or heard all Summer long, but buskin'd Hero's roaring out their Iambics

(k) *De scribenda Historia.*

from one end of the Town to the other. *This* could not be a more pleasant Sight, than to see one of our *moral Lunaticks* in his *hot Fit*. He cries out upon the Prevalence of *Vice*; invokes Reputation, Honour, Religion to assert his Cause, and mourn with him the Evils he suffers from a base, degenerate World: He thunders on his brave Breast, as much as to tell you, that there frighted *Virtue*, there poor *Astræa*, just on the Wing for Heaven, has taken up her last Stage; and if she dies of Grief, do but open his noble Heart, and you may there trace the fresh Marks of her departing Foot-steps.

THUS we see the untenable precarious Post of *Virtue*, when she enters by *Admiration*; which would almost persuade one that this is not the natural Way of getting into our Acquaintance: And I am confirmed in this Opinion, by observing the different Reception she met with in *Greece* and *Rome*, where she came differently recommended. The latter brave People were long Strangers

to

†

to all the Refinements of Fancy; and by their Genius and Circumstances, averſe to all Theoretic Speculations. *Simple Nature* was their *Goddeſs*, and *unſophiſticated Reaſon*, their *Religion*. Here *Virtue* enter'd by the *Underſtanding*; and mighty was her Progreſs amongſt her rude unletter'd *Pupils*. They embraced her as part of their *Effence*, not as a gay *Ornament*, to be wore for *Oſtentation*: So that her ſtill Voice was ſilently obey'd; and no more Notice taken of her Operations, than of the natural Functions of the Mind or Body: But in the Words of their great Hiſtorian, *Salluſt*, "*Optimus quiſque facere quam dicere malebat.*" Now in *Greece* things went on at a different rate; in *Greece*, where *Plato* himſelf confeſſes (*l*) that *Philophy* (the Word by which they would expreſs the Science of *Virtue*) actually owed its Birth to *Admiration*. The *Underſtanding* wander'd in Search of ideal Excellence, through all the Windings of metaphyſi-

(*l*) In his *Theetetus*.

cal Speculations; and Virtue entering (as *Plato* confessed) by *Admiration*, became but the fondling Toy of Fancy: Their reverend Teachers made a Science of it; they methodized it; they were always talking of it, and yet, amidst all this Ostentation of Concern for its Interests, they suffer'd it to evaporate under their very BEARDS in Noise and Smoke. In a Word, the *Greeks* could never rise higher than *justa facere*, the Fruits of Virtue unnaturally forc'd by the Warmth of *Admiration*; while the *Romans* arrived to the full Perfection of *justum esse*, the mature Product of Virtue concocted in the Understanding.

To conclude, it was, no doubt, from the Discovery of these Evils arising from excessive *Admiration*, that made the more cautious of the *Greek* Philosophers restrain their Pupils in the too forward Use of it; and the wisest of all the *Romans* totally forbid it in these oracular Lines;

Nil

*Nil ADMIRARI, prope res est una, Numici,
Solaque quæ possit facere, & servare be-
atum. (m)*

AND now to come about again.

II. A *second Cause* of this Deluge of Prodigies, in historic Compositions, is another *Weakness* too natural likewise to the human Mind; which one may call a *national Pride*: Through this we appear considerable enough to challenge the Regard of Providence in the most frequent Interpositions; whether these be in our Favour, or for our Punishment, this national Passion is equally gratified: *And here we see what it was that most strongly drew the Roman Writers to transgress in the Prodigious*; and amongst the rest LIVY himself; who, though a Master (n) in every Part of *Nature*, yet engaging in the Contemplation of that surprizing

(m) Hor. *Ep.* 6. l. 1.

(n) *Vid.* Seneca *fil. Ep.* 100.

Series of good Fortune, that advanced Rome to the Dominion of Mankind, and unable to explore the Causes that lay hid in the *Penetralia* of Providence; *inflam'd with the Love of his Country, that Roman Virtue*; he could not chuse but revere her as the first Favourite of Heaven; and so gave into every thing that might advance the Credit of her Divinity. Thus is the *Dilemma*, in the beginning of this Discourse, easily evaded. *Livy* is a Believer of Prodigies, yet no Superstitious; a Philosopher, and here no Free-thinker. But if you would see this *Roman Spirit* at its full Height, consult what remains of *Julius Obsequens, de (o) Prodigis*; in which Work he was at the Pains to collect all the Prodigies

(o) This Work appears to have been wrote in Defence of expiring *Paganism*, and so has met with the common Fate of all Books of the same Times and Character: But its mutilated Parts have been looked upon with such Compassion and Charity by that *honest German, Conrade Lycosthenes*, that he has given a Supplement to the zealous and devout Performance.

recorded

recorded by his Countrymen, *ab U.C. ad An. 742*. Punishments or Favours, 'twas all a Case; all was for the Honour of *Old Rome*; (p) but have we not as zealous Partisans for the Honour of *Old England*, who, not contented to glory in the Scourges she has formerly received from Heaven, are so great Asserters of impending Judgments for old national Crimes, that you would believe the Credit of the Kingdom depended on the

(p) Even *Tacitus*, as affectedly Sceptical as he is, speaking of the Misfortunes of the Empire in his first Book of Histories, cannot disguise the ROMAN; and when Affairs had so wry a Look, that Men of cooler Complexions, or less *Lovers of their Country*, would have seen, or thought they saw, all the Marks of the total Neglect and Reprobation of Heaven; this national Pride still buoys him up, and if he must acknowledge that the Gods had no longer any Care for their Safeties, it could not be denied that they were still most rigorous Avengers of their Injuries. "*Nec enim unquam atrocioribus populi Rom. cladibus, magisque justis judiciis approbatum est, non esse curæ deis securitatem nostram, esse ultionem.*" And observe, he had just before been speaking of the several Prodiges that happened at that time.

Truth

Truth of their Predictions. Judgments on the Posterity of principal Agents, is another thing: But to think national Punishments due, after national Satisfaction made, and national Reformation established, so as the Repetition of the Crime is become impossible; must proceed only from that odd kind of *Pride* we speak of. *Horace*, indeed, a much better Divine in this Case, speaking of the same Thing, argues upon right Grounds.

*Delicta majorum immeritus lues,
Romane, DONEC Tempia refeceris
Aedesque labentes Deorum, et
Foeda nigro simulacra fumo. (q)*

Now as *Superstition* is sometimes found mixed with the former Weakness, viz. the Love of *Falshood*; so *Enthusiasm*, we see, has frequently its Share in this: But it must be confessed, that here the *Evil* has the noblest Cause in the World, the Love of one's Country.

(q) *Carm. l. 3. Od. 6.*

Great is its Fault, but glorious is its Flame. (r)

AND I do not know whether we should not be Losers by it, if in succeeding to root it out of Minds so enthusiastically borne away, we should diminish the least Spark of that *Cælestial Fire*.

BUT there is a Sect of Anti Moralists, who have *our Hobbes*, and the *French Duke de la Rochefoucault* for their Leaders, that, give it but Encouragement, would soon rid our Hands of this Inconvenience, and most effectually prevent all Return from that Quarter: For whereas it was the Business of ancient Philosophy, to give us a due Veneration for the Dignity of *human Nature*; they described it as it really was, beneficent, brave, and a *Lover of its Species*; a Principle, become Sacred since our divine Master made it the Foundation of his Religion: These

Men, for what Ends we shall see presently, endeavouring to create a Contempt and Horror for it, have *painted* it base, cowardly, envious, and a *Lover of its self*. A View so senseless and shocking to the common Notices of Humanity, that I affirm him no honest Man, and incapable of discharging the Offices of a Son, a Subject, or a Father, that in the sudden, and even involuntary Workings of the Affections, does not perceive the *Fucus*. Now between the ancient Doctrine of the Dignity of human Nature and publick Liberty, there is so strict and natural an Union, that it is impossible to repeat them, without destroying both: So that whatever Zeal this new Sect may pretend for public Good, they must be, in spite of all their Pretences, the most fatal Enemies to that, which only can procure it, publick Liberty. Publick Liberty, which is the Balm of human Misery, the Quintessence of human Felicity, and the best Recompence for the Loss of a Terrestrial Paradise.

FOR while the *Love of the Species* is thought to be implanted in the Mind by Nature; Instinct is assisted by a Sense of Duty, to seek the Happiness of *it*; and our Enquiry, at length, discovers that nothing can produce this Happiness, but *publick Liberty*: Then to procure *this*, being the Means of gratifying the noblest of its innate Passions; we see what it was that drew heroic Minds, through all Ages, from MOSES to WILLIAM THE THIRD, to declare themselves such unwearied Advocates for the common Rights of Mankind.

BUT when once we can be brought to persuade ourselves, that this *Love of the Species* is Chimerical; that the Notion was invented by crafty *Knaves*, to make *Dupes* of the Young, the Vain, and the Ambitious; that Nature has confined us to the narrow *Sphere of Self-love*, and that our most pompous Boasts of a generous Disinterestedness, are but the artful Disguises of that Passion; we become, like *Ixion*, ashamed of our Fondness for

a mistaken

a *mistaken Juno*, and leave the *gaudy Exhalation* to be dispers'd by the *Storms of popular Tumults*, or the *Sun-shine of Court-flattery*: Or if, haply, the *Memory* of it yet remains, the *little People* employ it to countenance *Licentiousness*, and the *Great*, to monopolize *Oppression*.

THESE are unavoidable Consequences. And, indeed, the jolly Philosopher of *Malmesbury*, in a drunken Fit, spoke out: For intoxicated with his new brew'd *Hypothesis of human Baseness*, he fell dotingly fond of an *absolute Master*: And, *O rem ridiculam CATO, & jocosam!* to discredit *publick Liberty*, translated *Thucydides*. 'Tis true, he never meddled with *Antiquity*; but to abuse it; witness again, his Translation of *Homer*: But the Cause of his Spight was no Mystery; for the far best Part of it contains little else than Precepts or Examples of this *innate Honesty of the Mind*: Yet to prosecute it with more Decency, *Antiquity* was to be all proscribed for the Sake of his *Leviathan*; and 'tis certain he was equally

concerned; for how could those *Twin-Brothers*, *human Baseness* and *publick Slavery* keep their Credit, while there remained in Being, so many unexceptionable Testimonies of their Shame and Confusion?

BUT we must not forget the *French Nobleman*, who, to accommodate his Work to the Taste and Capacity of the Courtiers, propagated, at the same time with *Hobbes*, the same Doctrine in loose, independent *Maxims*. Those of his own Quality may be free with him. Lord *Shaftsbury* calls him "a petty Retailer of Wit, who has run Changes and Divisions without End, on this Article of *Self-love*." (f) His *Fancies* spread wonderfully among the *Noblesse*; and I am very much of Opinion, that to that as much as any one Cause, we may ascribe the Triumphs of the two *Cardinals* in the Minority of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, over the then remaining

(f) *Charact.* Vol. I. p. 120.

Liberties of the State, for neither is the Connection nor Congruity between *Baseness* and *Slavery* to be questioned. What Thoughts, then, must we entertain of a late Writer, who, in a *Country of perfect Liberty*, has undertaken to revive this expiring Doctrine? For the *Fable of the Bees* is but the *Tap-droppings* of *Hobbes* and *Rochfoucault's* unnatural *Beverage*.

BUT *human Nature* and *Civil Government* deserve, it seems, no longer to be treated with Decency, their weak Side is now discover'd, and their Authority openly attacked. The Assault has been carried on at all Quarters, and Philosophy and Buffoonry equally in their Turns, employ'd in relieving one another. But *Scaramouch* is to have the Honour of the Day, and now marches to the Engagement on the Shoulders of the Philosopher. A thorough Banter upon these two Topics, is become the modish *Jeu d'Esprit* of our generous and hopeful *Youth*, who sure, if ever, are now in the Way of being *Merry and Wise*.

Wife. The rare Felicity of the Age, that can afford to carry on such important Works with so much good Humour! But thou, Reader, who hast unhappily imbibed too largely of the *four Spirit* of Antiquity, must pretend to no Share in the Honour. Thy Pride, perhaps, won't suffer thee to *degrade thy Species*; nor thy Partiality to thy Country, to *abuse thy Governors*. Your Masters; *the Ancients*, said it, and you, alas! believed it, that Mankind was more free from Malignity than Weakness; and less able, than dispos'd to mend: But hearken to better Instructors, and learn to efface those silly Prejudices.

THE *religious Author of the Tale of a Tub* will tell you, *Religion* is but a Reservoir of Fools and Madmen; and *the virtuous Lemuel Gulliver* will answer for the *State*, that it is a Den of Savages and Cut-throats. What think you, Reader; is not the System round and great? And now the Fig-leaf is so cleanly plucked off, what remains, but bravely to strike away the rotten Staff, that yet keeps

keeps our old doting Parents on their last Legs?

SERIOUSLY let it be as they say, that Ridicule and Satire are the Supplement of publick Laws; should not then, the Ends of both be the same; the Benefit of Mankind? But where is the Sense of a general Satire, if the whole Species be degenerated? And where is the Justice of it, if it be not? The Punishment of Lunaticks is as wise as the one; and a general Execution as honest as the other. In short, a general Satire, the Work only of ill Men or little Genius's, was proscribed of Old, both by the *Critic* and the *Magistrate*, as an Offence equally against Justice and common Sense.

THE Immortal *Socrates* employed his Wit to better Purpose. His Vein was rich, but frugal. He thought the Laugh came too dear, when bought at the Expence of Probity: And therefore laid it all out in the Improvement and Reform of Manners. But not to be partial to Antiquity, it must be owned, that

that even then, for one *Socrates* to Reform, it had a *Democritus* to Sneer, a *Diogenes* to Snarl, nay, even an *Heraclitus* to Weep at human Obliquity. So much easier has it always been, to invent a false Philosophy on the Credit of a prevailing Passion, than to use even the first Principles of Reason, to curb and restrain it. And here 'tis well worth observing, that he, of all these, whom the World treated most severely, was the *Reformer*: As he who most grossly abused his Reason, even to the Arguing against geometrical Demonstrations, was the *Scoffer*. The first Part of the Remark, these gamesome Gentlemen, by their *present Conduct*, seem to have been no Strangers to; and the latter they would do well to reflect on for the Regulation of their *future*. Again, at the Revival of Letters, a *second Socrates* arose in *Erasmus*, a *Democritus* in *Rablais*; and a *Diogenes* in *Peter Aretin*: And again, the well directed Railery of the *great Reformer*, drew down against its Author more Enemies, than did all the Filth, Scurrility and Impieties of the *Buffoon* and *Cynick*.

'TIS

'Tis our Glory, and I wish it may
 prove our Happiness, to give the Enemies
 of Religion and Liberty, the most un-
 interrupted Freedom in carrying on their
 Attacks. But as we justly pride ourselves
 in imitating the free Manners, and elegant
 Humanity of *Greece* and *Rome*; rather
 than the barbarous Inquisitorial Spirit of
 a *Spanish* or *Italic Hierarchy*; it would
 be shameful in us to be Ignorant of, or
 not to imitate the nice and equitable
 Bounds, those wise Republicks put to a
 perfect Toleration. These, if I mistake
 not, are exactly marked out, in the famed
 Case of the Philosopher *Protagoras*.
 And I must ask Pardon of the Learned,
 for thinking that the *Areopagite* regarded
 his Behaviour in a different Light from
 what *Tully*, who mentions the Story,
 seems to say they did. *Protagoras* pub-
 lished a Treatise, with these strange
 Words in the beginning of it, *Whether*
there be Gods, or whether there be none,
I shan't trouble myself about the Matter, (1)

(1) *De Diis neque ut sint, neque ut non sint,*
habeo dicere, apud Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1.

for which he was Banished, and his Book publicly Burnt; certainly not from the *Athenians* Impatience, in suffering that Matter to be made a Problem of; but for the extravagant Way of treating so momentous a Question, an Air of Levity and vicious Indifference, unbecoming a Philosopher or an honest Man. *'Tis a small Matter that Truth requires Sobriety, and a State, Decency and good Manners, to qualify you for the noble Employment of thinking freely, and thinking justly. In vain you tell us, that Men, by Right of Nature, claim full Liberty of Philosophising. The Buffoon and Sneerer are still on the wrong Side the Charter. Thus, we may presume, did those discerning Judges argue. Their Indulgence to Epicurus very much countenances our Conjecture; for that Philosopher even adventured to determine on the Question, and founded his whole Doctrine upon the Destruction of Providence and Religion; yet his Retirement, his Temperance, his Justice, his Friendship, all bore Testimony of Error only in the* Judg.

Judgment. And the Solitude of the *Garden* was undisturbed, while Modesty and Sobriety resided there.

BUT it is now high Time to ask my Reader's Pardon in Form, for my Digression on *Virtue* in the foregoing Head, and for this of *Publick Liberty* just ended.

— If they are to be adjudged Digressions. For the *Knight Errant* in his Way to Court, to break a Lance for Fame and Reputation, while he steps aside to redress an *injured Virgin*, the proper Office of his *Order*, may be said to be more truly in his Way, than before he left the Road.

III. Now as *Folly* begets *Knavery*, by the most natural Generation; *The Free-thinking Historian*, though above the Reach of these two *Weaknesses*, so largely descanted on; in the preceding Heads, yet experiencing how subject the Mind is to be tainted by them, is prompted by a strong *Desire of Popularity*, to take Advantage of this prevailing Propensity for *lying Wonders*; and to fit his

Treat to the Palate of his Readers. See here the Source of one of those *Knaveries of the Writer*, which in the beginning of this *Discourse*, I assigned as a *Cause of portentous Relations*. Of this, the Greek *Historians*, were first and principally guilty; and the great Father of Falshood, *Herodotus*, above Measure: For all those *monstrous Stories*, to some of which he throws in a Salvo for his own Credit, were but Traps, laid at an Olympic Entertainment, for the Applause of a proud and lazy People? For what a Sacred Writer delivers of the *Athenians* in his Days, was always true of the *Greeks* in general; *that they spent their Time in nothing else; but either to TELL or HEAR some NEW THING.* (u)

BUT these *Historians* have not stopped here, they have found their Account in giving in to every Branch of this popular Delusion: So that not only the *Prodigious* and *Supernatural*, but likewise

(u) Acts xvii. 21.

mere *human Actions* are dress'd up by them, in strange fancied Ornaments of Affright and Terror; and thus delivered over to the *secular Arm*, as it were, in a SAN-BENIT. See here a remarkable Instance. *Sallust* in his *Bel. Catil.* having given us the Conspirators in Council, with the Result of their Debates, goes on in this Manner, "*Fuere ea tempestate, qui dicerent, Catilinam, oratione habita, cum ad jusjurandum populares sceleris sui adigeret, humani corporis sanguinem vino permixtum in pateris circumtulisse, &c. — Non nulli fida & hæc, & multa præterea existimabant ab iis, qui Ciceronis invdiam, quæ postea orta est, leniri credebant, atrocitate sceleris eorum, qui pœnas dederant. Nobis ea res pro magnitudine parum comperta est.*"

Now that this Story was false, we need not doubt: For had it been otherwise, could *Fulvia* be ignorant of it, who had so entire an Ascendant over the most dissolute of the Gang, that was under no more Restraints of Modesty, than he was of Policy, to hinder his indulging a

Woman's Curiosity in the minutest Particulars? Would not such a Circumstance have fixed the greatest Impressions of Horror in that Sex? and would not those Impressions have been uppermost, while she was making her voluntary Discovery to *Cicero*? Could *Cicero* have been silent on this Head; that *Cicero*, I say, who, in his Invectives against the Conspirators, loads them with all the Guilt they were but imagined capable of committing? and to strengthen all this, *Sallust* confesses, after the most exact Enquiry, he could find little to countenance the Rumour; and so acquiesces in that very probable Account of its Original; that it was broached *afterwards*, to allay the Odium again *Tully's* Administration. But all this fair Dealing and Circumspection could not restrain the *Greek Writers* that copy'd after him, from deserting *Truth* to serve themselves of the Weaknesses above-mentioned. *Plutarch* (x) and *Dio Cassius* (y) have both wrote

(x) *In vita Cic.*

(y) *Lib. Hist. 36.*

of the *Catiline Conspiracy*, and given the Tale of this horrid Sanction, not only as a most unquestioned Fact, but have heightened it with all the Improvements of a *true Grecian Spirit*: For whereas *Sallust* says it was reported that the Conspirators drank human Blood mixed with Wine; these Compilers affirm it was the Blood of a Man or Boy (for in that Particular only, they differ) whose Throat they cut for the very Purpose. This round Way of doing things, by our two *Greeks*, I must confess, appear'd to me at first Sight, unaccountable. To see these *Copyists* of After-times so carefully gather up an old senseless Story, to Engraff upon, that had been long ago rooted up, and thrown aside by a great *Original Writer* of the very Age in which it first sprung up. But our Way of considering it, clears all; and lays them so very open, that we see their Drift as clearly as if they had cried out in the very Words of the old *Roman Mob-drivers*, *Appellamus ad Populum*.

BUT though this at first, was no more in the *Greek Writers*, than *winking* at their Reader's *blind Side*; yet by a long Habit of keeping their *Eyes* shut, like *Geta* in *Appian* (z) they become at last, *stark blind*. In this Condition was the *gross Body* of them in the Time of *Juvenal*; and agreeably to it, must we understand his

——— *Quidquid Græcia mendax*
AUDET in Historia.——— (a)

For intellectual Blindness gives the greatest *Relievo* to the Spirits, as the feel'd Pigeon has the most adventurous Flights.

IT would be endless to recount the several Engines, Historians of all Ages have invented to catch the Applause of the People, though at the Expence of Truth, and just Composition. But, for the Honour of the *Moderns*, I shall ex-

(z) *Hist. Rom. de bell. civil.* (a) *Sat. 10.*

amine one lately fitted up by the *French* Historians, and set a going with uncommon Success. It is an entirely new Species of historic Writing, that meddles only with the *Revolutions of a Country*, to which the ingenious *Abbot de Vertot* has given the highest Reputation; (b) But never, sure, was any Attempt in History, productive of more or greater Evils: The present Fondness for this *Cheat*, and its yet unsuspected *Imposture*, will excuse my Pains, in proving how irregular, false and imperfect the Composition is in itself. Secondly, how injurious it is to the Country it so dismembers; and, Thirdly, how destructive to all just History.

THAT this *Form* should wonderfully allure common Readers, is no way strange. The busy, active Catastrophe of *Revolutions*, gives a tumultuous kind of Pleasure to those vulgar Minds, that

(b) By his *Histoire des Revolutions dans la Rep. Romaine*.

remain unaffected with the calm Scenes, that the still and steady Advances of a well-ballanced State, to secure its Peace, Power and Durability, present before them. (c) Add to this, that the *Revolution* Part, is the great Repository of all the Stores for *Admiration*, whose Power and Fascination on the Fancy, we have at large examined: Whereas the *Steady* Part affords Entertainment only for the Understanding, by its sober Lessons on publick Utility. This Advantage then, let these *French Charlatans* make their

(c) Perhaps my learned Reader may urge me with the Authority of Lord *Bacon*, who in the Dedication of his History of *Hen. VII.* seems to countenance the *Revolution Writers* in that famous Passage where he says, that peaceable Times are the best to live in; but unsettled Times the best to write of: The *Latin* is, *Quorum alterum genus temporum viventibus commodius, alterum, scribentibus gratius.* Now he apparently uses the Word *gratius*, from the Experience he had as an Historian, how much that Part of History allured the Generality of Readers, which to a Writer fond of Applause, would always carry the Recommendation of *gratius* along with it.

best of; but let them at the same time confess, that Truth, and just Composition is another Thing: This is to be measured by the Nature and End of Civil History; its very Name, and the Practice of all Antiquity teaches us to define it *a Relation of publick Actions, in a continued chronological Series between any two proposed Periods*: Not a capricious Jumping from one distant Fact to another, as Fancy, or a fair Mark, directs their Course. The End of it is general Utility; by drawing Uses from Examples; let us see, then, which contributes most to this End, the turbid, or the calm Season. The History of the Revolutions and Subversions of Government can never afford Examples of great Use: The Rareness of the Phœnomenon, and the dark and confused *Faces* of it, afford only *new* Evidence to the *old* Truth of *the Instability of human Things*; or at best is Physick to a People going to run mad of the same Distemper; besides, on seeing nothing but Battles and Devastations, Revolts of Towns and Provinces, the Struggles of Factions, and the Violation
of

of Faith and Treaties, we are apt to be disgusted at Society ; to think irreverently of it, and in time to drop all Concern for its Interests: But the History of the Arts of Peace and Commerce, in which we find the Amendments of Laws, the Refinements of Manners, the Advancement of Knowledge, the Improvements of publick Conveniences, and the Establishment of Liberty and Power ; this is the Work of Use, and constant and universal Concernment : And what Man in his Senses won't think that the History of GEORGE THE FIRST, will be esteemed, to the latest Posterity, as infinitely more subservient to all the Purposes of wise Policy and civil Prudence, than those of an *Alexander*, a *Tamerlain*, or a *Lewis*?

SECONDLY, The Injury to the State so handled, is intolerable : Let us consider only how *Rome*, the immortal City, is treated in the *Histoire des Rev. dans la Rep. Romaine* ; in which the Writer professes but to describe its Imperfections. A noble Task : Near a kin to his, who
first

first gave a Map of the Spots of the Sun.
 To succeed in this, was no great Difficul-
 ty; but, perhaps, the Historian might
 have been as much puzzled as the Astro-
 nomer, had he been obliged to have
 delineated the dazzling Glories of it. *But*
this kind of History best discovers the
Nature and Genius of a People, and
teaches us to form the truest Judgment
of a Constitution. Ridiculous! As if
 one should measure the Benefits of the
Trent, the *Severn*, or the *Thames*, by
 the casual Overflowing of a Summer-
 inundation: But Men are apt to run into
 hasty Conclusions. I have met, amongst
 my ingenious Friends, with some, who
 would not give themselves the Pains to
 learn the *Roman* Constitution from its
 own Writers; or perhaps might think,
 according to the Proverb, that it would
 be seeking *Rome in Rome*; but took
 their Notions of it from this famed
 History, which I understood were so
 rightful, as to make them conceive,
 that *Rome*, amidst her Conquests, differed
 no more from *Rome*, the *Asylum* of Cut-
 throats and Russians, than as her Power
 fur-

furnished her with Arms and Passions to be more universally destructive to Mankind. (d) But our own hard Case in this regard,

The Partisans of this *French* Writer have another Quarrel with the *Roman* Republic. What, say they, can give us a more contemptible Idea of a large State, than to find it mostly govern'd by *Custom*, to have few *written Laws*, and not so much as a *Magna Charta* to mark and ascertain the Boundaries of *Jurisdiction* between *Senate* and *People*? This, indeed, was the Case. *Custom*, or the traditional Observance of the Practice of their Fore-fathers, was what directed them in their public as well as private Determinations. This was appealed to in pronouncing Sentence against a Criminal, where part of the *Formulary* was *MORE MAJORUM*. So *Sallust*, speaking of the Expulsion of *Tarquinius*, says, *Mutato MORE*, instead of *LEGE mutata*; and *Virgil*, *Pacisque imponere MOREM*. But that this was a Defect in civil Policy, will not be so easily made out. Let us compare *Customs* and *written Laws* together in a few Instances. But as the getting the Ancients of one's Side, is accounted Half a Victory, it won't be amiss, first to fortify ourselves with a noble Observation of *Dio Chrysostom's*. *That the Enslaved are the fittest to be governed by Laws, and free Men by Custom*. This Paradox, ill understood by *M. Casaubon*, in whom I found it quoted, I shall endeavour

Regard, will shew us, Theirs: For while,
by the Unhappiness of an Ill-ballanced
Constitution, we were frequently necessi-
tated

endeavour to defend. *Dio's* Politicks were here directed principally upon *Rome* and her Provinces. That at least it was a Republic, and Conquests made by it, he had his Eye upon, is evident from hence; Conquered Countries under a Monarchy, could, with no Propriety, be said to be governed by Laws; for the Will of the Monarch, by the Mouth of the Lieutenant or Bashaw, is the Terms of Obedience; but in a free State, the regular debated Decrees of the Legislature, afford them the Benefit of fixed and established Laws. So much for the Fact. The Reason on which *Dio* founds his Observation, may be gather'd from hence. — *Custom* being of the Nature of paternal Injunctions, traditionally delivered from Father to Son, the Observance of it by a State, must needs be a Mark of Freedom; and coming originally from the revered Founders of their Liberty, will be an Encouragement and Assistance to them in Defence of that Blessing, as being the Prerogative intailed upon it: But a conquered People must pretend to none of this Distinction: Having, by their Degeneracy, lost all Right to their brave Fore-fathers free Institutions, their Masters will, in Policy, take the Forfeiture; and the fixing a Conquest, must be done by giving Laws, that every Moment put them in mind of the

F

Power

tated in behalf of Liberty to take the Field, or implore the Aid of a generous Protector; we know who they are amongst

Power of the Victor; nothing being more dangerous than to trust a late subdued People with *old Customs*, that perpetually upbraid their Baseness, and provoke them to revolt.

But now to the Point. The Wisdom of the *Roman Republic*, in their Veneration for Custom, and Backwardness to introduce *new written Laws*, may be seen by the following Comparison.

1. The Benefits of *new written Laws* are merely confined to the Consequences of their Observance: But *customary Laws* keeping up, as we observed above, a Veneration for the Founders, engage Men in the Imitation of their *Virtues* as well as *Policy*. To this was owing the religious Regard, the *Romans*, paid to their Forefathers Memory; and, consequently, their adhering for so many Ages to the Practice of the same *Virtues* which nothing contributed more to deface, than the Introduction of a voluminous Body of new Laws over the Neck of venerable *Custom*. And this their factious and ambitious *Demagogues* always made their first Care to promote.

2. The Simplicity, Conciseness and Antiquity of *Custom*, give an Air of Majesty and Immutability, that inspires Awe and Veneration: But *new Laws* are too apt to be *Voluminous*, and

amongst our Neighbours, that, for these old Diseases of State long since remedied, continue to this Day, to traduce the best-natured People upon Earth, with the
 Title

and so, perplexed and mutable; from whence proceeds Neglect, Contempt and Ignorance.

3. As every thing of human Institution is subject to gross Imperfections; those, in *new Laws*, which have such, are easily discovered; and so for the Weakness of one Part, all the other Parts, though sound, are brought into Contempt: But such Weaknesses in a *Custom*, for very obvious Reasons, evade an Examination; besides, a friendly Prejudice, as we shall see by what follows, always stands up in their Defence.

4. But in Case a *new Law* be perfectly equitable and necessary, yet if the Procurers of it have betrayed a Conduct that confesses, By-Ends and private Motives, the Disgust to the Circumstances dispose us, unreasonably indeed, to an Irreverence of the Law itself. But we are indulgently blind to the most visible Imperfections of an *old Custom*. If we can't satisfy a malicious Objector in the *Cui bono*, we can persuade ourselves, that our wise Fore-fathers had good Reasons for what they enjoined; and if they be now lost, the Benefit will still go along with the Observance, though we don't know how. 'Tis in this Manner the *Roman Lawyers* speak in the *Digests*, *Tit. De ratione legis non inquirenda*.

Title of savage, restless, turbulent *Revolutionists*. But I won't answer for the Abbot that he was not paying his Devotions, while he thus sacrificed the most divine State that ever was. This is a stale Trick (*d*); if not here plaid over again; why such frequent and tragical Exclamations against the Divisions between

" *Non omnium quæ a MAJORIBUS constituta sunt, RATIO reddi potest; & ideo rationes eorum, quæ constituuntur, inquire non oportet: alicuin multa ex his quæ certa sunt subvertuntur.*" L. 1. Tit. 3. L. 20 & 21.

5. Those Laws that keep up for themselves the greatest Love and Observance, must needs be best; but it is the most notorious Truth, for which above you see the Reasons, that the People have ever had a strong Attachment to *old Custom*, and an equal Neglect of *new written Laws*.

All that I wou'd conclude from hence, is this; That the *Romans* might have found enough to reply to the Enemies of their Constitution; and we, enough to explain an ill-understood Observation, That *numerous Laws are a Sign of a degenerate Community*; which is generally thought to mean, That numerous Laws are the Consequence of debauched Manners, when in Truth, *They are very often the Cause*.

(*d*) See what I say of *Hobbes* above.

Senate and People? A much better *Connoisseur* in these Matters, even the great *Machiavel* assures us, that these very Divisions were the Foundation and Security of their Greatness.

— *Genus unde Latinum,
Albanique patres, atque altæ Mœnia Romæ.*

As I trust only to my Memory, that I have read such an Observation in the beginning of *Machiavel's Discorsi sopra T. Livio*, I have forgot whether he gives his Reasons for it: But there was no need; for those that are the least acquainted with Civil History, must know, that the Equilibrium of Power, so essential to a free State, was kept steady by these Divisions: And when ambitious Men had once found the Art of ending them, by cajoling the People, and forming Parties within the Walls of the Senate, Liberty was no more.

THIRDLY, The Danger to true History from this false Species, is very imminent. We have observed above, that this kind

of Composition has a great *Eclat*, and by the Bustle and Activity of the Scenes, must become the darling Entertainment of the People. This then, adorned with all the Art that the best modern Historians, for such I esteem the *French*, are Masters of, must needs take off the Regard to *general History* of the *genuine Composition*; and so hinder the Production of those we want, and cause the Loss of those we have: For a great Genius will scarce employ his Time on an out-of-fashioned Labour; and that Neglect brings on Destruction, we are sufficiently informed, by the irreparable Damage *Antiquity* has sustained by that insipid, senseless Composition called *Abridgment*. What then must we expect from this *spirituous Imposture*; which persuades the credulous Reader that the *Soul of History* is here disengaged from the unweildy, lumpish *Carcasses* of *Chronicle* and *Annal*; where it informs a more convenient *Body*, and better adapted to the Briskness of its Operations?

IV. A SECOND *knavish* Trick to get off this *false Ware* (and the last of the four general Causes which I assign for the Historians Attachment to Prodigies, &c.) is, when the Writer happens not to be enough acquainted with *human Nature*, or not sufficiently instructed in his Story : When he wants either Dexterity or Information to unravel the Perplexity of concurrent Causes, and to discern the Clew that is to guide him through all the oblique and dark Recesses of the Mind. Then, when a struggling *State* receives, like *Antæus*, fresh Vigour from every Overthrow ; or a swift *Revolution* strikes the astonished *Nations* as a Fire from Heaven ; then, I say, has he recourse to *Prodigies* and *Portents* ; divine Declarations, that the Establishment or Ruin of a *Polity* was fatally accelerated or retarded. Thus, with the License of the ancient Poets, when a Difficulty becomes inexplicable, he brings in his *God* to conclude gracefully, and solve Appearances.

Now

Now here, the Cause being Ignorance of *human Nature*, and in the subject Story, *the Moderns are properly concerned*; how they come to be so scandalously defective as they are, in these two fundamental Qualities of a Writer, would be enquired into. It is remarkable, that anciently, the Science of History was confined to Republicks; while the vast despotic Monarchies, contemporary with those free States, were so barren of all Writers of this Kind, that at this Day the very Names of several of them had been unknown to us, had not the Republican Historians let us into so much of their Affairs as concerned themselves: And, indeed, this latter seems to be the just and natural Abode of Civil History: A Tyranny, not allowing sufficient Materials for the Composition; or affording only the most Vile and Adulterate; while it keeps the Springs of Action, which only can give Life and Vigour to the Relation, concealed in the *Cabinet*. But in free States, every principal Citizen has the Trust of the

Secret.

Secret. Tacitus confesses something like this (e), and the Rabble of *Augustan Writers* confirm it. (f)

BUT now the Fortune of History is quite reversed; She has changed her Stork, like Nature, and the best modern Performers are all HISTORIOGRAPHERS ROYAL: The Inconveniencies consequent on this Change, are evidently seen in the *French Writers*, though the most *adroit* of all their Rivals; for being ashamed to have recourse to a *supernatural List* every time they *stick fast*; they do all they can to procure a real Supply of Strength. From hence it is,

(e) In the beginning of his first Book of Histories, where, observing that their Historians had degenerated since their Loss of Liberty, he gives this as one Reason for it. — *Primum inscitia Reip. ut aliene.* I believe he was so very sensible of this Want of sufficient Information, even in himself, that I take that flaunting Dress of refined political Speculation, which he was the Inventor of, to be only a pompous Cover of real Indigence.

(f) *Spartianus Capitolinus, &c.*

that

that that Nation so much abounds in *Anecdotes* and *private Memoirs*; where, frequently, to unveil one single Secret, a Man must hunt through a whole Treatise.

THE other great Defect of the modern Historians, is their Ignorance of *human Nature*. — 'Tis incredible to conceive what Pains the Ancients took to make themselves Masters of this Knowledge, when once they had formed the grand Design of writing Civil History. They underwent a Series of more than *Herculean* Labour. The making themselves Masters of Languages, Logic, Rhetoric, Morals, Law, and Philosophy, were but the first Stage of these ancient Adventurers; and when Years had thoroughly matured the Judgment, and Experience, gained by Travel, had disengaged and enlarged the Mind, they then applied themselves to the Study of the best Models in the *Art*; till by constant Reading and Meditation, they had formed a solid and sober System of Civil Policy:

Policy: And thus qualified, they began the arduous Task.

BUT the World is grown wiser, and our brave Countrymen more expeditious. We have *Writers for Eternity*, that have never learnt their *Elements*: Whose noble Preparations of Eloquence and Policy are a *modern News-Paper*, and all their Materials of Information, an *old Chronicle*. To such Accomplishments no Labour can be untried: And whether it be a *last Year's Annal*; a *general History of England*; or the *present State of all Mankind*; it is undertaken with equal Confidence, and finish'd with equal Success. But the *Sallusts* and the *Livys* were not the *Spare* of such compendious Studies.

*Non his Furventus orta Parentibus
Infecit Equor sanguine Punico;
Pyrrhumque & ingentem cecidit
Antiochum, Hannibalemque dirum.*

NEITHER did a *Raleigh* or a *Hyde* grow thus cheaply up to Immortality;
the

the only two, our Nation has yet produced of a *true historic Genius*. The first excelling in Grandeur and Majesty of Thought, equal to the Subject he undertook (g) and the latter, for his comprehensive Knowledge of Mankind, will for ever bear the unrivall'd Title of

(g) Observe his great Manner of ending the *first Part of the History of the World*. " By
 " this which we have already set down, is seen
 " the Beginning and End of the Three first
 " Monarchies of the World; whereof the
 " Founders and Erectors thought that they
 " could never have ended: That of *Rome*,
 " which made the Fourth, was also at this
 " Time almost at the highest. We have left
 " it flourishing in the middle of the Field;
 " having rooted up, or cut down, all that kept
 " it from the Eyes and Admiration of the
 " World; but after some Continuance, it shall
 " begin to lose the Beauty it had; the Storms
 " of Ambition shall beat her great Boughs and
 " Branches one against another; her Leaves
 " shall fall off, her Limbs wither, and a Rabble
 " of barbarous Nations enter the Field, and
 " cut her down." What Strength of Colouring!
 What Grace, what Nobleness of Expression!
 With what a Majesty does he close his immortal Labour! It puts one in Mind of the so much admired Exit of the late famed *Italian* Singer.

the

the *Chancellor of human Nature* (b). Almost all the rest of our Histories want Life, Soul, Shape, and Body: A mere
Hodge-

(b) IF I should affirm our own Country Writers have made further Advances in the Study of human Nature than any other People, it would be, perhaps, at the worst, but a partial Truth. And yet our Philosophers, tho' in their proper Province, can by no Means dispute the Post of Pre-eminence with the *Historian of the Grand Rebellion*. Herbert and Hobbes, two great Names in the Beginning and Middle of the last Century; both applied themselves with vast Labour to *this Study*. But the first with all his Strength, Dexterity, and enterprizing Genius, cou'd never get clear of the spiney Desarts of Scholastic Philosophy. The other, indeed, at once, broke thro' the entangling Darkeness, but dazled with the sudden Effusion of too much Light, in a little Time became stark blind. Lock went more cautiously to work; but his Time was chiefly taken up in opening and clearing the *Portal to this Study*; but in that so nobly adorned *Structure*, he has raised himself a *Triumphal Arch* of eternal Duration. Mr. Addison and Lord Shaftsbury now give Laws to Politeness, and their Decrees are the Standard of a fine Taste. The former in *these Researches* is sometimes superficial, but always beautiful and sober; the latter is more profound, but frequently whimsical and monstrous. But it is the great
G Hyde,

Hodge-podge of abortive Embryos, and rotten Carcasses, kept in an unnatural Ferment, (which the Vulgar mistake for real Life) by the Rank *Leven* of *Prodigies and Portents*. Which can't but afford good Diverſion to the Critic, while he observes how naturally one of their own Fables is here mythologized and explained, *Of a Church-yard Carcass raised and ſet a ſtrutting by the*

Hyde, and he alone, that in the Knowledge of Mankind is always clear, deep, eaſy and perfect. — I make no Scruple to confeſs that in the *History of the Grand Rebellion* there are more Offences againſt the Truth of Composition than in all the *beſt Greek and Roman* Hiſtorians put together : And think it no Difficulty to prove that in that ſingle Work there are more and far greater Excellencies than in the whole Body of antient Hiſtory. — It is, indeed, the only one of *Engliſh History* we can glory in. While the *French* boaſt a great Number of conſiderable Writers of their own Hiſtory : But to them we may answer as the Lioness in the Fable did to an ignoble Beaſt, who ſet an unreaſonable Value on the Fruitfulneſs of her Womb : *'Tis true, I bear but one, but that one is a Lion.*

Inflation of some hellish Succubus within.

AND now I am upon the State of *English* History, I can't forbear observing another Instance of the Grossness of our Taste, and the depressed Condition of our Genius, discoverable in an unnatural Fondness for any abortive Manuscript, that pretends but to relate to *English* Affairs; it is bought up at a great Expence, and reprinted with greater. *Stow*, and *Holinshead*, the Jest and Contempt of their learned and witty Contemporaries, for their long dull Stories of *Sherws* and *Sheriffs*, are become the serious Amusement of our present Virtuosi. Any uninformed senseless Heap of Rubbish, under the Name of a History of a Town, Society, College or Province, (i) have long

(i) I would recommend the Gentlemen of this Taste to the *Edict of Apollo*, given us by *Buccalini*, in his *Ragguagli di Parnaso*. Cent. 1. Raggu. 54 the most ingenious, and justest Piece of Critic on the Manner of writing History

long since taken from us the very Idea of a genuine Composition. Every Monkish Tale, and Lye, and Miracle, and Ballad, are rescued from their Dust and Worms, to proclaim the Poverty of our Forefathers; whose Nakedness, it seems, their pious Posterity take great Pleasure to pry into: For of all those Writings given us by the *Learned Oxford Antiquary*, there is not one that is not a Disgrace to Letters; most of them are so to common Sense, and some even to human Nature. Yet how set out! how trick'd! how adorned! how extolled!

— *Non levior cippus nunc imprimit ossa
Laudant convivæ. Nunc non a manibus*
(illis,
*Nunc non è tumulo, fortunataq; favilla,
Nascentur viola?*

story that ever was wrote. Amongst other Things *Apollo* expressly forbids those ridiculous Histories of obscure Towns, with their Mayors and Burgomasters. *Di più sotto la pena della perpetua infamia, espressamente proibiamo il potersi per l'avvenire scrivere historie particolari di città alcuna, se ella non sarà metropoli d'Imperio, di Regno, o di Provincia grande.*

PER

PERHAPS, my Reader, in his Turn,
takes up the Satirist, and going on where
I left off,

— *Rides, ait, & nimis uncis
Naribus indulges.*

BUT who can forbear, when he is
told, that *these Labours* now come from
the Printing House erected with the Pro-
fits of CLARENDON'S History, under
the Care of the same Editor who has
given us a very valuable Edition of
LIVY'S? Wonder not, Reader, at the
View of these Extravagancies. The hi-
storic Muse, after much vain longing for
a vigorous Adorer, is now fallen under
that *Indisposition* of her Sex, so well
known by a deprav'd Appetite for *Trash*
and *Cinders*.

THUS you see the constant Need the
Moderns have of the Aid and Support
of Prodigies. 'Tis a *Crouch* they can't
stir one Step without. The *Ancients*
indeed limped with it, out of *Wanton-*
ness,

ness, Conceit, or an Ill-habit ; and sometimes, like our lazy Beggars, to get an Alms. But these real Objects of Compassion want *Nerves and native Vigour*, as being, in Truth, *Cripples* from the very Womb.

I HAVE now ended the first Part of this Treatise, which shews the several Ends and Motives Historians of all Ages and Nations have had for their Attachment to *false* Miracles and Wonders.

BUT tho' I have taken so little Notice of that commonly assigned Cause, *Superstition*, I wou'd not have my Reader conclude that I discard it from any considerable Share in the Movement of this *Machine*. On the contrary, I know too well its Capacity for universal Sway, throughout the *large Wastes* of History. It runs thro' every Order of Historians, from the visionary *Midnight Monk*, to the sharp-sighted, exalted *Statesman*, long *hackneyed in the Ways of Men*.



A Critical and Philosophical

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

*Causes of Prodigies and Miracles,
as related by Historians.*

PART II.



ITHERTO we have been employed in tracing out the Causes of *an Evil*, whose Malignity was not perceived while *those* lay undiscovered: But shou'd we stop here, and, amidst so many Examples of Unsoundness and a sick Fancy,

cy, not produce one perfect Pattern of a right and healthful Judgment, our Work would be defective. We have shewn the great Propensity of Historians of every Age to forsake the bright and lightsome Paths of Nature, for the Pleasure of wandering thro' the gloomy Regions of Prodigies and Portents.

“ *Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbram,*
 “ *Perq; domos Ditis vacuas, & inania*
(regna.) ”

THE first that broke this Enchantment, and dispersed the shadowy Terrors, was the great Historian *Sallustius Crispus*; whose Merit will appear the more extraordinary, if we take a View of the State of History in *Rome* at the Time he began to adorn it with his Compositions; nor can I suspect that a short Account of the Rise and Progress of it, in that City, will be unacceptable to a Reader, who loves the History of the Arts.

HISTORY,

HISTORY, of all the Writings of Humanity, made the slowest Advances in its Progress from *Greece to Italy*; and the most hasty Return back again to the Bosom of her ancient Masters (a). *Rome* had given a *Plautus* and a *Terence*, a *Crassus* and *Antonius*, long before *History* had made the Promise of a Visit; and had gloriously opposed prevailing Barbarity in a *Claudian* and *Boetius*, long after *her* very Memory had been lost amongst them. And yet notwithstanding the backward Growth of this *Art*, it wanted neither *Genius* nor *Materials* to quicken its Maturity: For we are informed that *Scipio Africanus* employed his leisure Hours upon *Xenophon*; and *Marcus Brutus*, even amidst the busy Thoughts of Death and Victory, gave Attention to his Favourite *Polybius*, (b). But those haughty Masters of

(a) The best Accounts we have of the later Emperors, are from the *Greek* Writers.

(b) *Viz.* The Night before the Battle of *Pharsalia*; every Body knows he epitomized that

of Mankind studied the *Grecian* Writings, not to learn the *Historian's* Art, but the *Hero's*; and valued only how a Battle was *won*, not how it was *described*. So *L. Lucullus*, who had pass'd his Youth in the peaceful Employments of the Gown, by constant Application to those great *Originals*, had so well qualified himself in all the Functions of a great General (c), that when sent by the *Senate* against *Mithridates* and *Tigranes*, the Two most formidable Monarchs of the Earth, he managed the long War with such Conduct

that Historian. *Jf. Casaubon* took the Abridgment of all those Books of *Polybius* between the 5th and the 18th in his Edition, for that very Epitome which *Brutus* left unfinish'd. This he speaks with Confidence, in his Dedication to *Hen. IV. of France*. His Reasons for so extraordinary a Conjecture he reserves, he says, for another Place; meaning, without doubt, the famous Commentary upon this Writer; which we find by his Letters he had long laboured in, and had brought to great Forwardness. It had raised mighty Expectations in the Republic of Letters; but why it never appear'd, is well known to the Learned.

(c) *Plutarch in Lucul.*

and

and Success, as effectually to break their Power, and give them up an easy Conquest to his Successor in Command. While the Care of recording their immortal Actions was left to the *Pontifex Maximus*, part of whose Office it was to do this Justice to them (d). For from the most early Times of the Republic, it had been the Custom of that holy Magistrate to make a *yearly Register* of the Civil Transactions. A simple unanimated Narrative, without Ornament or Connexion; for Truth alone was supposed to give the utmost Perfection to historical Compositions. These, from their Manner, were called *Annals*. And so great was the Veneration for them, that when some of the more forward Genius's began to enrich their Country with Labours of this kind, the Form and Name was still preserved; tho' they saw attend it all the Inconveniences of an excessive Length. To this, the best Remedy they applied, was

(d) *Tully libro secundo de Oratore.*

a curt concise Expression. And so, *Brevity*, the most attractive Grace of *History*, was casually added to it; not as it self a *Beauty*, but only as the decent Cover of a *Deformity*. Thus far was *History* brought on its Way by (*) *Pictor*, *Cato* and *Piso* (e). The next of Consequence that took it up, was (†) *Cælius Antipater*, (f) and he adorned the naked Thoughts, with Ornaments of Sublimity and Majesty; but wanting the Arts of Politeness, he cou'd only design Nobly, and left the Delicacies of Colouring to more advanced Masters. On this Account the Ancients esteemed him the Fore-runner of *SALLUST*, as *Cato* was of *Tully*, and *Ennius* of *Virgil*. But his greatest Honour arises from the Pains the divine *Brutus* bestowed in abridging him (g). And now *History*, bating the Rubs it met with in (h) *Clodius* and *Asellio*,

(*) U. C. 480, to 550. (e) *Idem in Bruto*.

(†) 620. (f) *Idem primo de legibus secundo de Oratore*; & in *Bruto*.

(g) *Idem ad Attic. lib. 15. Ep. 8.* (h) 633

(b) who instead of rising on the last noble Plan, fell back again into the insipid Languor of their Nerveless Forefathers; excepting these, I say, *History* made constant Advances. And soon after (i) *Q. Catullus*, (*) who was Colleague to *Marius* in his fourth Consulate, added somewhat of Purity and Politeness to what *Antipater* had only given Strength and Vigour. Then *Hortensius*, *Atticus*, and *Varro*, the Three great Luminaries of the Seventh Age, all tried their Talents this Way; and yet left History so far short of Perfection, that their common Friend *Cicero* ingenuously confesses, *Abest Historia literis nostris — Quanquam alius, alio, plus habet virium, tamen quid tam exile quam isti omnes.* (k) In this Condition was the *Roman Annal*, when *SALLUST* arose to give it the last Finishings of Art and Genius. And tho' *Tully*, *Cæsar*, and *Lucejus*, his Contemporaries, were

(b) *Idem primo de legibus.*

(i) *Idem in Bruto.* (*) 650.

(k) *De legibus, lib. 1.*

perhaps all able to contend the Glory with him; yet are they now disqualified to come into Competition. Of the two First, the one did no more than give good Rules; and the other only furnished Materials, (excellent as they are) for History: And of the Third, the Ravages of Time and Ignorance has left us nothing but the Name: So that in every Sense it may be said,

“ *Crispus Romana primus in Historia.*”

He was in full Vigour at his first setting out; and like another *Hercules* subdued *Monsters* (i. e. Prodigies) in his Cradle; (1) as the Story of the *Catiline*

(1) That this History was his first Essay in the kind, I think, may be pretty clearly proved. *Sallust* was born U. C. 668. — Expelled the Senate, 703. — Restored by *Cæsar*, 706. — Second Retirement on *Cæsar*'s Death, 709. — Died 716. — So that he was 33 Years of Age when expelled. — His first Retreat was of 3 Years. — His second of 7, and he died at 48. Now he tells us, his Retirement put him first upon

line Conspiracy may testify. And a nobler Proof of consummate Skill was never given.

HERE

upon writing History. And nothing is more certain than that the *Catiline* and *Jugurthine* Wars were the Product of his first Retreat; the whole Tenour of those two Histories won't permit us to doubt it. All that can be made a Question is, which of these two was wrote first? I conceive the *Catiline*, for the following Reasons. 1. The Lateness of the Attempt, and the Simplicity of the Subject, made it the fittest for an Author's first Essay. 2. He seems here to write as *Tacitus* says, *Recentibus odiis*, his Choler is not yet subsided; 'tis like *Claudian's* Sea, *impacata quies*. 3. In his Introduction to the *Catiline* War, he declares he was but just entered into this new Way of Life, and after what Manner he intended to proceed in writing of the *Roman* Affairs; and in the Introduction to the *Jugurthine*, he speaks like one thoroughly engaged in a Course of Life; and complains of Detractors that set light by his Labours. 4. Nothing but a traditional Belief of what I contend for, cou'd have produced such an Agreement in the Manuscripts, and printed Books of this Author, to place the *Bell. Cat.* always first, when the *Bell. Jugur.* was ended 48 Years before the other broke out.

HERE was a Crisis of such Importance as allowed full Scope for *Miracle* and *Prodigy*. Here, a *Roman* might have been

From these Proofs may be deduced a Corollary or Two worth observing.

The first is a Vindication of the Proem to the *Catiline* War, from the Censure of the whole Tribe of Critics; from *Quintilian* to his last Editor. It is condemned, first for having no Relation to the History, and secondly, for being, out of all Proportion, too long for it.

As to the first, if this History was, as I think it can't be denied, the first Fruits of his Retirement, nothing cou'd be more natural, nor even necessary, than an Apology for his Conduct, and new espoused Resolution; and as such this Introduction must be allowed to be a compleat one. As for the Length, we are to consider *Sallust's* Manner of writing History; and this was, he tells us, — *Res gestas Populi Romani CARPTIM, ut quæq; memorie digna videbantur perscribere*. To cull out the noblest Portions of the *Roman* Story, as the *Catiline*, the *Jugurthine*, the *Cimbrian* War, and set these Jewels in a Coronet to adorn the *Genius* of immortal *Rome*. So that this Proem is to be esteemed an Introduction to the whole Collection, rather than to the single History of the *Catiline* Conspiracy. And in this extended View,

we

been well excus'd for believing all Heaven shou'd sympathize with falling *Rome*; even tho' the *Sacred College*, the *Senate-House*,

we see it admirably correspond to the Dignity and Compass of his Undertaking.

The other Corollary is a Detection of a vulgar Error, hitherto unquestioned. We hinted in the former Part of this Discourse, that it was the Custom for the ancient Historians to travel for thorough Information. So *Polybius* crossed the *Alps* to view the Rout of *Hannibal* in his famous March to *Rome*. From such Stories as these, I suppose, rose the Report that *Sallust* took a Voyage into *Africa*, the better to describe the Marches, Counter-marches, and Encampments of *Marius* and *Jugurtha*. I confess, I always suspected this fine Tale, for Reasons by-and-by; and tracing up the Author, I found it to be the famous *Petrarch*, a Writer but of the 14th Century, who produces no Authority for it. The later Critics take his Word for it, and speak of it without the least Hesitation. This perfectly confirmed my Suspicion, which I had entertained for the following Reason: By what has been said above it appears that the two Histories now remaining were the Product of his first Retirement of 3 Years. I ask then, Whether it can be supposed, that when you have substracted the necessary Time for composing his Mind after his Expulsion, and that for collecting

House, and the *Forum*, had not concurred, as they did, to cherish the Disposition.

Now, what a fine Opportunity was here of introducing his Story, in all the Blaze and Terror of anxious and disordered Nature ? With what a Sublime might that Flash of Lightning have been

lecting his Materials, the Remainder be sufficient for Two such Histories, and a Voyage into *Africa* ? If *Petrarch* in reality had this Story from any older Author, the Mistake (for such I don't doubt it was) might have been occasioned by *Sallust*'s being afterwards in *Africa* in a Publick Employment under *Cesar* the Usurper. But I rather believe it to be an *Italian* Invention : For those Writers, who, indeed, affect a greater Knowledge of Antiquity than the *Tramontanes*, don't stick at such Trifles. What, for Example, so common as that Story of *John Chrysostom*'s delighting in the Study of *Aristophanes* ; and yet Mr. *Menage* in the Preface to the second Part of his *Observations sur la Langue Francois*, tells us, That the most ancient Author of it is *Aldus Manucius*, in his Dedication of the *Greek Comique* to *Daniel Clarius*. Indeed, the Improbability of the Thing made Mr. *Le Fevre* suspect it before.

brought

brought in, to grace the approaching Ruin, which, in the Consulate of *Cotta* and *Torquatus* struck off the Spires of the *Capitol*, overthrew the Images of the Gods and Heroes, melted down the brazen Tablets of their Laws, and the gilded Statue of the Founder of their City; especially when the whole College of the *Haruspices* had agreed, that it should signify the Ravages of Fire and Sword in a Civil and Domestick War? Then after the Conspiracy broke out, Did not the Gods partake, as it were, in the Astonishment? Illuminations were seen every Night in the West; the Earth trembled, and Heaven appeared on Fire.

THUS has *Tully* described this Scene of Wonders, in all the Pomp of Vanity and Eloquence (*m*).

BUT see our Author: Instead of taking Advantage of all this Havock in

(*m*) *Orat. ter. in Catilinam.* — *§ de Divin.*
lib. I.

the *Capitol*, he introduces his Story with a cool Philosophical Lecture on the Dignity of Human Nature. The *Interpretation of the Haruspices* is only taken Notice of as it was Evidence against *Lentulus* ; and all the rest is phlegmatically passed over with a “ *Si mul, id quod in tali re solet, alii porta atq; prodigia nuntiabant* ;” as only the Mormos and Bugbears of a frightened Rabble.

No, he needed none of these Expedients ; he cou'd do his Work without them : For having so exquisitely painted the Degeneracy of *Virtuous Rome*, in a luxurious and oppressive *Nobles* ; in a poor and debauched People ; in a *Catiline* and his lewd Companions, encouraged by a *Lethargic Senate*, the far Absence of the *Arms* of the State, and the inviting Example of late successful Attempts against it ; we see the surprizing Story reconciled at once to Faith and Probability.

BUT

BUT this is no more than we might expect from our Author's Character and Accomplishments ; he had a Nobleness of Mind that made him incapable of imposing on his Reader ; and an Extent of Judgment that wou'd not suffer a Cheat to pass upon itself. Thus was he, by the Happiness of a natural Genius, secure from the Irregularities mentioned in the Three first general Causes, I above assigned of *this Evil*. That his profound *Skill in his Profession* set him above the Reach of the Fourth and Last, I shall now endeavour to prove at large ; My Reader may, perhaps, remember that this fourth Cause was *Ignorance of human Nature, and of human Actions*, in which the Historian is both the *Bubble*, and the *Cheat* ; in the first Case he is apt to deceive himself ; in the second, his Reader ; and in both, to have Recourse to one common Expedient ; for be assured, you hear an Oracle in the following Sentence, PLACET, HUMANITA-

TIS

TIS EXPERTES, HABERE DIVINITATIS AUCTORES (n).

I. THE *Instance* I am about to give of *Sallust's Knowledge of human Nature*, is no inconsiderable one; you will find in it something superior to the nicest Dissection of complicated Passions, (o) or even the more comprehensive Skill of analyzing the Constitution of a collective Body or People. So that if we trace Notions and Opinions thro' the largest Periods of Time, we may, I hope, after this Notice be well excused.

THE *Vicissitudes* of humane Grandeur, the *Translations and Revolutions* of States and Empires, the *perpetual Fluctuations* of Powers and Dignities, is a *Phenomenon* that caught the earliest Observation of Mankind. Experience of what passed under their own Eyes, in a Life moderately extended,

(n) *Tully de Divin. l. 2.*

(o) See the latter Part of this Head.

without regarding *general History*, which is nothing but a careless Round of Advancement and Abasement, was sufficient to persuade them of some strange *Affection* in the Universe, that seem'd to oppose Stability, and human Prudence. These Surmises, favouring our natural Disposition, for the *Wonderful* soon grew up into an established Opinion, that all this Confusion and Turmoil was caused by a certain *Deity*, who envied the Prosperity of Mankind; who, for his Pastime, scatter'd Empires, over-turned Thrones, and kick'd Crowns and Scepters from one Side of the Globe to the other; while Constancy, Duration, and a pure unmixed Felicity, were the hated Objects of his Resentment. To this *Deity* they gave the several Names of *Nemesis*, *Fortune*, the Evil Genius, or *Demon*. *Herodotus*, who is always at Hand to supply us with Examples of an industriously propagated Error (*p*), is the first and most

(*p*) See the third Head of the foregoing Chapter.

express Reporter of this strange Opinion, (q) in a Letter from *Amasis* King of *Egypt*, to *Polycrates* Tyrant of *Samos*, inserted in his History, this latter is congratulated with, on his good Fortune; but withal told, that his unmixed Prosperity made him very obnoxious to the Resentment of the *envious Deity*; and therefore to avoid a total Destruction, he is advised to submit to some voluntary Misfortune. But *Herodotus* went so far into this impious Opinion, as to insinuate, in Three of Four several Places, that *all* the Gods were of an envious Nature; for which *Plutarch* justly accuses him of Malignity (r). *Plutarch*, who, notwithstanding, has twice (s) avowed the Notion of an *envious Demon*. To this we must impute the Concern which *Isidore*, an ancient *Father*, tells us, was observed in the Behaviour of the famous *Epaminondas*, after a long Train of high and un-

(q) *Lib. 3. Histor.*

(r) Περὶ τῆς Ἐφθύσεως κακονομίας.

(s) *In vita Æmilij.*

Usque adeo res humanas VIS ABDITA
 [QUÆDAM
 OBTERIT, & pulchros Fasceis sœvas-
 [que securis. (x)]

But to go thro' with Quotations of this Kind, wou'd be to transcribe from every Writer of Antiquity; in all of which you may discover frequent Traces of this Opinion. This only let me observe in general, that where you find a Writer contemplating on his own Felicity, and immediately correcting himself with a *venia sit dicto*, an *impune dixisse liceat*, or some such Humiliation, there the Terrors of this *malicious Deity*, you may believe, gave his Conscience a cruel Twitch.

THUS deeply rooted was the *Opinion*, when *Philosophy* suffer'd that grand Revolution (y) under the Christian

(x) *Lib. 5.*

(y) Amongst the Changes in Manners, consequent on this Revolution, there is one that
 more

System. On the Introduction of which so great Accessions were made, to the Empire of Truth. Of which, this was
not

more forcibly attracts the Moralists Observation ; which, because its unaccountable Appearances receive Light only from the present Subject, we shall adventure here to mention. *Aristotle*, in that Part of his *Rhetorics*, where he treats of *Characters*, remarks that the Men he calls *εὐτυχῆς* or *the Fortunate*, amidst several bad Qualities, had one that made amends for all, they being generally *φιλόθεοι*, *lovers of God*. And that Misfortunes made all the Atheists, even amongst the Philosophers, in the Pagan World, will be allowed by the Knowing in Antiquity ; witness the Extravagance of the famous *Diagoras* : Now nothing is more certain than that the Case, generally speaking, is the direct Reverse in *Christendom*. An undisturbed Affluence is at present the rankest Soil of Impiety ; and Affliction the hopesullest Season for casting in the Seeds of Religion. This Riddle can only be explained by what is observed above of the prevailing Notion of an envious Deity, and the Overthrow of it by Christianity. While that Opinion was held orthodox, who so apt to cherish it, as the Man in Adversity ? The *ill Principle* was soon believed *the prevailing one*. And the Transition from a *bad Deity*, to none at all, was very easy ; especially with Men so apt to call the Administration

not the least Part, that *this Opinion* lost all its Credit; for acquiring just Ideas of the Deity that monstrous Error presently vanished.

BUT

tion of Providence to account, on every cross Look in the Moral World. A Pick-pocket cou'd not escape by a resolute Denial, but the Sufferer was presently at his

— *Audis*

Juppiter hæc, nec labra moves, cum mittere vo-
[cena]
Debueras, vel marmoreus, vel æneus? aut cur
In Carbone tuo charta pia tura soluta
Ponimus. —

But the Man at ease in his Condition, with a Temper smooth and unruffled, wou'd naturally be on the excusing Side. He wou'd still be inventing something, like *Eliphaz*, the *Temanite* in *Job*, right or wrong to soften untoward Appearances, and strive to persuade himself that every Thing in the main was right, and pretty much as it should be: Besides, his Interest was concerned that Things shou'd go on as they had done; his Pride was flatter'd in believing they had proceeded with the utmost Wisdom, and his Gratitude engaged to love and venerate his Benefactor; but now we are altogether in another Management. Christianity,

BUT the Defeat of a false *Hypothesis*, was but a small Part of our Advantages ; we were greatly assisted in erecting the true, by unfolding that grand Mystery of the Corruption of our Nature ; which, if soberly attended to, wou'd have led to the Discovery, that *Humanity is the only Cause of human Vicissitudes.*

as we say above, has given us juster Notions of the *Deity* ; and assured us, that Misfortunes are the kind and tender Corrections of a Father ; to wean us from Passions inconsistent with our Profession, and to exercise us in the Practice of the most heroic Virtues. Again, our Religion enjoins a Behaviour to Men in Prosperity, so opposite to their carnal Appetites and Passions, that it is no Wonder that the Thoughtless and Corrupt amongst the Rich shou'd struggle to withdraw themselves from those Obligations, which, in their debauch'd Sense of Things, wou'd debarr them of Pleasures which both Wealth and Nature designed for them. This, I presume, may tolerably account for these different Characters of the World in these two distant Periods.

LET us see then what Advances some Christian Philosophers have made under this *holy Discipline*. Why, *true to that Love of Falshood*, so particularly explained in the first Part of this Discourse, instead of embracing Truth that now came open and unveiled to meet them, they fell back into a more enormous Error, than that they had been forced to forsake.

THEY picked up, out of the Dotages of Astrology, an Opinion that all sublunary Affairs were at the Mercy of the various Conjunctions and Revolutions of the Stars and Planets ; and according to their benign or malignant Aspects, States and civil Dignities, Religions and general Opinions, were propagated or overthrown. This Notion spread greatly at the *Restoration* of Learning in the *West*, and was much befriended by the ablest Philosophers and Physicians of that Time ; but since, it has been very much on the Decline, and has itself felt the Rage of some of those

those adverse Constellations. The last Man of Consequence besotted with it was Mr. Bayle, if we credit the Author *De la vie & les sentimens de Lucilio Vanini* (z). Thus we see it was a DEMON that possessed Men on this Subject, before Christianity; but disappearing at the Dawn of that new Light, and the Mind *new swept and garnished*, like the Man's in the Parable, soon admitted *seven other Spirits* (a) *more wicked than the former, and its last State was worse than the first* (b).

BUT to return to the Age of Sallust, in which the demoniac Hypothesis was generally received and acknowledged. This did not satisfy our Historian; he suspected they made a Mystery where there was none; that they rambled abroad for what was only to be found within: And therefore he refused to acquiesce in the general Determination;

(z) Pag. 174.

(a) The Seven Planets.

(b) Mat. xii. 43.

but wou'd examine the Cause anew. And surely the good Historian is the fittest for an Enquiry of this Kind. The *Philosopher* and he both profess to investigate human Nature, but which uses the most probable Means of Success, may be easily understood by reflecting on their different Attachments. The Historian, having no espoused Hypotheses, or Party Opinions to bias him, forms his Judgment of Nature only from the simple Contemplation of her Actions; follows where-ever she leads; and is bounded only within the Limits of her Operations: While the Philosopher busies himself in accommodating all her Appearances to the Principles of a School of which he has sworn himself a *Sectator*; and can consider her in no other, nor different Capacity, than what his Master has assigned to her. In short, the Historian has here the very same Advantages over the moral Philosopher, that the *Experimental Naturalist* has over the *Aristotelian*, in *Physic*. And our Author's Success fully proves it; for he soon found the current Philosophy

phy on this Head, groundless, and far
 beside the Mark ; which the Ignorance
 of our Domestick State set a Rambling
 after Foreign Causes, while both the
 Evil and the Remedy were in our own
 Hands : So that he scruples not to af-
 firm, “ That in this fantastick Farce of
 “ Life, in which the Scene is ever
 “ changing and inconstant, the whole
 “ Machinery is of *human* Direction ;
 “ and the *Mind* the only *Choragus* of
 “ the Entertainment ; that the Abuse
 “ of the rational Faculty leads up this
 “ Confusion more irremediable than
 “ *Bays's Dance* ; and that a Reform in
 “ it, to a constant regular Tenour,
 “ wou'd reduce every Thing again into
 “ a steady Posture of Harmony and
 “ Order. That to say the Mind is the
 “ Slave of Chance or Destiny is false ;
 “ that she herself is the sole Director and
 “ Disposer of human Affairs ; and that to
 “ draw in a superior Agent to bear the
 “ Blame, is only a Cover for our Levities,
 “ our Vices, or our Ignorance. That
 “ *Virtue* in public Concerns, is omni-
 “ potent, and that *Vice* is the *evil Genius*,
 “ or

“ or *Demon*, that throws the World off the “ Hinges (c).” This is one of those Discoveries (taking along with it the Circumstances of Time and Prejudice when our Author made it) that none but the most consummate Genius cou’d hit upon ; and yet when divulged, every Man thinks himself equal to ; but I chose this Instance of our Author’s *Knowledge*

(z) *Quod si regum atque imperatorum animi virtus in pace ita ut in bello valeret, equabilis atque constantius sese res humanæ haberent. Neque aliud alio ferri, neque mutari ac misceri omnia cerneret. — Ita imperium semper ad optimum quemq; a minus bono transfertur. In-* trod. in bell. Cat. *Falso queritur de natura sua, genus humanum, quod imbecilla — Forte potius quam virtute regatur. Dux atq; imperator vitæ mortalium animus est : qui ubi ad gloriam virtutis via grassatur abunde pollens potensque — neque fortuna eget — ubi per socordiam vires, tempus, ingenium defluxere, naturæ infirmitas accusatur. Quod si hominibus bonarum rerum tanta cura esset, quanto studio aliena, ac nihil profutura, multumque etiam periculosa petunt ; neq; regerentur magis quam regerent casus — animus — rector humani generis, agit atque habet cuncta, neque ipse habetur. Intr. in Bell. Jug.*

of Nature; not so much for its Greatness, as for its Oppositeness to our Subject. For my judicious Reader will observe, that this Opinion of an *Envious Deity* was an inexhaustible Reservoir of Prodigies and Portents. Was an unwieldy Empire tottering into Ruins! the *evil Genius* lay hard upon it. Did a debauch'd People sell their Liberty for a Song? The *Envious Deity* made the Bargain. Was an insolent over-grown Minister kicked back to his original Dunghill? O the malicious Demon! and all this, by an Opinion, that not only pleased the Mob, but satisfied the Philosopher.

AFTER this, and such other Instances of our Author's profound Knowledge of our Nature, that might be given, one wou'd wonder to see a Writer of so great Reputation, as is Mr. *de St. Evremond*, searching for something extraordinary in this Way, in that celebrated Stricture in the Character of *Cataline*, *alieni appetens, sui refusus*. " Here, (says that Critic) is
" discovered

“ discovered a Contrariety in human
 “ Nature, that escapes the ordinary
 “ Rank of Historians. Had *Plutarch*
 “ described *Catiline*, he had either
 “ drawn him covetous or profuse; that
 “ *alieni appetens, sui profusus*, was a-
 “ bove his Reach; he could never have
 “ reconciled those Contrarieties which
 “ *Sallust* has so well explained (d).”
 But after all, where’s the Uncommon-
 ness or seeming Contradiction in this
 Character, that it should escape the
 Notice of all but refined Thinkers, or
 be reserved for their Explanation? A
 plain Moralist wou’d tell you the Thing
 could scarce be otherwise. A lasting
Prodigality must have proportion’d Sup-
 plies. To keep in Motion the *Ma-*
chine of Luxury, the Wheels that work
inward must have as constant and strong
 a Course, as those, whose Turn and
 Efficacy are *outwardly* directed. Which
 may be well enough compared to one

(d) *Vid. Oeuvres mêlées. Tom. 2. Jugement*
sur Seneque, Plutarque & Petrone.

of those horrid *Eruptions* in the Northern Seas, which Voyagers tell us is perpetually disgorging its Entrails, and is always attended at a small Distance, by a fatal *Vortex* that with equal Celerity swallows down every thing within its Reach. But *Sallust*, consummate Master, understood the Passions at another Rate. He is so far from thinking this a Rarity of Temper, that required an uncommon Reach to explain, that a few Paragraphs after, he makes it the general Character of the whole *Roman Nobility*, *Sua parvi pendere, aliena cupere*. Indeed had the Character been inverted to that of *Galba's* in *Tacitus*, (e) *Pecuniæ aliæ NON appetens, suæ parcus*, *St. Evremond* would have had Reason. And we might have admired in it an Uncommonness, not a little surprizing.

BUT this *Frenchman's* Manner of criticising, puts me in Mind of a very

(e) *Lib. 1. Histor.*

just Remark of one of his Countrymen (f), as I found it in *Baillet's* first Vol. of the *Jugemens de Sçavans*, which I here translate. " The Critics on other
 " Men's Writings may be divided into
 " two different Classes : The one apply themselves to Things only, the
 " other to the Manner ; and so are both
 " subject to contrary Defects. The
 " first attain a thorough Knowledge of
 " Things, but have a very gross Taste
 " of the Manner ; the other indeed
 " judge with Refinement and Delicacy
 " of the Manner, but have a very superficial Discernment of Things. The
 " former Defect is common to Writers
 " in Retirement, and the latter to
 " those who live in the World, as being more concerned to please than
 " instruct." My intelligent Reader will easily see to which Class *St. Evremond* belongs.

(f) *M. Nicole, de l' Education du Prince, prim. par.*

BUT

BUT to proceed —

II. WE come now to the Instance I promised to give of our Author's *Knowledge of Facts* ; the other grand Security against supernatural Relations. In this is seen the Perfection of *Historic Art* ; which consists as well in the *Method of telling*, as in the Knowledge of what is fit and necessary to be told. The true Secret of this Skill *Sallust* discovers in the following Passage of his Introduction to the *Catiline Conspiracy* (g). *Imprimis Arduum videtur res gestas scribere: primum, quod factis dicta sunt exæquanda: dehinc, quia plerique,*

(g) I take it to be a Matter of the greatest Difficulty to write History. First, because the Style is to equal the Subject ; and secondly because it happens for the most Part, that when you condemn criminal Actions, you are suspected of Malevolence and Ill-will ; and when you celebrate a great and virtuous Character, so much of it as your Reader thinks within his own Sphere, may pass, but down goes all the rest for Hyperbole and Fable.

*quæ delicta reprehenderis malevolentia
 & invidia dicta putant : ubi de magna
 virtute atque gloria bonorum memores,
 quæ sibi quisque facilia factu putat,
 æquo animo accipit : supra ea, veluti
 ficta pro falsis ducit.* Here he gives
 two Reasons for the Difficulty of writ-
 ing History ; the first relates to the
Manner of telling, and is not immedi-
 ately to our Subject : But as it is a fine
 Instance of our Author's Skill, and con-
 tains a Precept not well understood, I
 shall adventure in a few Words to ex-
 plain it.

WE are to understand then by the
Diction's equalling the Story, not only
 that in general, History requires a pe-
 culiar Majesty and Gravity of Style,
 suitable to the Relation of public Trans-
 actions ; but likewise that to each dif-
 ferent Part of History there is a propor-
 tioned Language adapted. So the Rise
 and first Progress of an Infant State
 shou'd be described in Language as sim-
 ple and unadorned, as are its Manners
 while the large Accessions of Arts and
 Empire

Empire must be painted in all the Elegance and Sublimity that accompanies those flourishing Periods. Again, the Consultations of the Cabinet, the Amendment of Laws, the Security of Traffick wou'd be explained with the utmost Weight and Gravity; while in the Motions of Armies, the Insurrections of Provinces, and the Torrent of Invasions, the *Stile* must be *reversed*, and the sharper End applied to provoke and animate the Narration with all the Pomp, Vivacity, and Fire, necessary to bring up the swelling Scene before the Eyes of the Reader. But amidst all this Variety of *Stile*, there is an Unity still to be preserved. The historic *Stile* for all that, has its proper Genius and peculiar Character; and when a Critic can easily discover this, in the Ground-work, thro' all the various and distinct Species, which we above mentioned, then it is that the *Stile* has attained Perfection. For Instance we have observed that History, as the Subject differs, requires a *Stile* more or less Figurative; this makes the *Variety*; but then there is in general a certain appropriated Tem-

perature in the Figures, which must always reign thro'out the Historic Diction, and this makes its Note or Character of Unity. So much by the Bye, in Explanation of the first Reason.

THE second Reason concerns *the Matter of the Story*, and consequently is the Subject of our Enquiry, concerning our Author's *true Knowledge of Facts*. But, unhappily for the Critics, it is not easy to get at the true Sense of it. You shall hear what *A. Gellius*, the most renowned of the ancient Grammarians, who has wrote a professed Critic on it, thinks of the Matter. And the rather, because his Dissertation is, for ought I know, the Sum of every thing yet advanced in Explanation and Defence of it. *Noctes Atticae*, l. 4. c. 15. "Elegantia orationis Sallustii
"verborumque facundia & novandi
"studium cum multa prorsus invidia
"fuit: multique non mediocri ingenio viri conati sunt reprehendere pleraque & obtrectare. In quibus plura
"inscitè aut malignè vellicant: nonnulla tamen videri possunt non indig-

“ na reprehensione. Quale illud in Ca-
 “ tilinæ historia repertum est ; quod ha-
 “ beat eam speciem, quasi parum at-
 “ tentè dictum. Verba Sallustii hæc
 “ sunt.” *Ac mihi quidem, tametsi*
haudquaquam par gloria sequatur scrip-
torem & auctorem rerum, tamen impri-
mis ARDUUM videtur res gestas
scribere. Primum, quod facta dictis
exæquanda sunt : dein, quòd plerique,
quæ delicta reprehenderis malivolentia &
invidia dicta putant. Ubi de magna
virtute atque gloria bonorum memores ;
quæ sibi quisque facilia factu putat,
æquo animo accipit : suprà ; veluti ficta
pro falsis ducit. “ Proposuit, inquiunt,
 “ dicturum causas, quam obrem vide-
 “ tur esse ARDUUM res gestas scribere :
 “ atque ibi non primum *causam*, sed
 “ *querelas* dicit. Non enim *causa* vide-
 “ ri debet, cur historiæ opus Arduum sit,
 “ quod ii, qui legunt, aut iniquè inter-
 “ pretantur quæ scripta sunt, aut vera
 “ esse non credunt. Obnoxiam quippe
 “ & objectam falsis existimationibus
 “ eam rem dicendam magis aiunt quam
 “ Arduam. Quia, quod ARDUUM est,
 “ sui

“ sui operis difficultate, est ARDUUM,
 “ non opinionis alienæ erroribus. Hæc
 “ illi malivoli reprehensores dicunt.
 “ Sed, Arduum, Sallustius non pro
 “ *difficili* tantum; sed pro eo quoque
 “ ponit, quod Græci ΔΥΣΧΕΡΕΣ
 “ aut ΧΑΛΕΠΟΝ appellant: quod
 “ est tum difficile, tum molestum quo-
 “ que & incommodum & intrectabile.
 “ Quorum verborum significatio a sen-
 “ tentia Sallustii supra scripta non ab-
 “ horret.” Hear him in *English*.——
 “ In this Place, (say the Censurers)
 “ *Sallust* proposes to speak of the *Cau-*
 “ *ses* that make writing History diffi-
 “ cult. And instead of a *Cause*, he
 “ puts us off with a *Complaint*. For
 “ how can that be a *Cause*, that the
 “ writing History is difficult, that those
 “ who read it pass a perverse Judgment
 “ on it? Surely (say they) *Sallust*
 “ should rather have said, that History,
 “ when wrote, was obnoxious to the
 “ Censure of unequal Judges, than
 “ that there was a Difficulty in writing
 “ it. For the Difficulty of writing
 “ proceeds from the Nature of the
 “ Work

“ Work itself, not from the false Taste
 “ of its Readers. Thus do these male-
 “ volous Cavillers object to the Accu-
 “ racy of the second Part of this Pe-
 “ riod; but, by their leave, *Sallust*
 “ does not use the Word *Arduum*
 “ in the mere Sense of *Difficult*, but
 “ wou’d have it signify what the *Greeks*
 “ understand by their *δυσχερὲς* or *χαλε-*
 “ *πόν*, which do not so properly signify
 “ *difficult*, as *troublesome*, *vexatious*,
 “ &c. which is to the Purpose.” This
 is the Sum of the Accuser’s Charge,
 and *A. Gellius*’s Defence. You see, he
 hopes to set all right, without going out
 of his own Way, by the mere Force
 of a *Greek* Word. But his Solution
 is by no means satisfactory.

1. IT is contrary to all the Rules of
 Logic, and good writing, where a single
 Proposition is supported by two Reasons,
 for the Attribute of that Proposition, to
 bear one Sense when joined to the first
 Reason, and another, when joined to the
 second. And yet this is what *A. Gellius*
 wou’d have. For ’tis agreed on all
 Hands, that the Attribute *Arduum* when
 taken

taken along with the first Reason, *quod factis dicta sunt exæquanda*, signifies difficult to be performed ; and yet would he have the same Attribute when applied to the other Reason, *dehinc quia, &c.* signify *something that gives Uneasiness in the Performance.*

2. IT is contrary to the true Use, and Genius of Language, for the same Word in the same Sentence to bear above one precise Signification. Indeed it became necessary for the avoiding an invconvenient multiplying of Words, frequently to assign to one Term two or more Sets of Ideas ; but then it never was to bear above one of those Combinations at a Time, as occasional Use required ; and the *Tour* of the Period, for the most Part, easily led to the Signification ; tho' sometimes even with all the Circumspection that the Regard to this Rule exacts, the Inconveniencies of Ambiguity cannot be avoided. What then could be the Consequences, if a single Word was allowed to bear above one Signification in the same Sentence?

3. BUT

3. BUT the Word *Arduus* in the best *Latin* Writers is, I think, always used to express the Idea of *something hard to be performed*, [*difficilis*]; and not of *what gives Pain and Vexation to the Performer*, [*molestus, incommodus*] as *A. Gellius* wou'd have it in *Sallust's* second Reason to signify; tho' tis true *δυσχερὴς* and *χαλεπὸς* are commonly used in both Senses. But admitting that *Arduus* may be found by chance in a Classic Writer to bear the latter Signification, yet it certainly being extremely rare, *Sallust*, we may be confident, wou'd never admit that Use of the Word; 1st, Because, by the Confession of *A. Gellius* himself, he was *Proprietatum in verbis retinentissimus*; (b) and therefore had he intended *A. Gellius* his Sense, he wou'd have explained himself by *importunus*, the proper Word that marks that Idea; as where he says, *Vi quidem regere patriam* —

(b) *Noël. Art. l. 10. c. 20.*

importunum est (i). 2dly, Because none knew better than he, that the historic Stile requires (as the younger *Pliny* expresses it) *Vox ex medio petita* (k). By which is not to be understood, as *Pliny's* Commentators imagine, the *Language of the Mob*; but only *Words of the most determinate Signification*, as those in common Use generally are. For History being, of all Writings, of the most universal Concernment, shou'd, most of all, labour at Perspicuity. So that, besides its Clearness, it had nothing in common with the vulgar Stile. This the polite *Pliny* well knew; for complimenting a Friend, who had undertaken to write of the *Dacic War*, he has almost transcribed from *Sallust* the first Part of this famous Passage.—
 “Una sed maxima difficultas, quod
 “hæc [*gesta*] æquare dicendo Ardu-
 “um.” (l).

(i) *Bell. Jugur. in introd.*

(k) *Lib. 5. Ep. 8.*

(l) *Idem l. 8. Ep. 4.*

HITHERTO we see these *malevo-*
lous Critics keep their Ground, and not-
 withstanding the Attacks of our Gram-
 marian, poor *Sallust* still lies at their
 Mercy. The Truth is, his Case is be-
 yond the Remedy of Etymologies and
 Lexicons. We must have Recourse to
 the Funds of good Sense to disembarass
 our Historian (*m*). And the Accusation
 against him is not trivial : For if where
 he professes (as he does here) to give
 two Causes of the Difficulty of writing
 History, he gives but one, and, for the
 other, flurs us off with a bare Com-
 plaint, this is certainly being guilty, in
 a very high Degree, of Inaccuracy and

(*m*) Reasoning was not *A. Gellius's* Fort.
 This is not the only Place where he attempts
 Things beyond his Reach. Witness the Defence
 of *Epicurus* against *Plutarch* ; from which it
 appears he did not understand the State of the
 Question. See *Noct. Att. l. 2. c. 6.* and *Mure-*
tus's Var. Lect. l. 11. c. 16. Besides how un-
 reasonably fond he is, of forced and strained
 Interpretations of Words, (as here) we have an
 Instance in his Defence of *Virgil, l. 2. c. 6.*

Impropropriety ; but sure on a nearer In-
 spection we shall find our Author above
 Faults of so common an Alloy. We
 see him then complaining of the Diffi-
 culty of composing a just History, and
 assigning the two chief Reasons of it.
 But what has made his second Reason
 appear none, and has given so much
 Trouble and Perplexity to the Critics,
 I humbly presume is this ; *Sallust*, by a
 very usual Way of writing, has put the
 Effect for the *Cause*. Give me leave to
 explain my self. — If we enquire into
 the *Cause* of the People's wrong Judg-
 ment, or Misinterpretation of the Wri-
 ter, here complained of, we shall find it
 to arise from the Imperfection of the
 Writing. For it is evident from the
 Turn of our Author's Observation on
 their running into the two different Ex-
 tremes, by accusing of Malevolence or
 Flattery, that their Judgment was *erro-*
neous merely, and not perverse. We
 shall find it, I say, to arise from the
 Defects of the Composition. Either
 when the Historian knows not how to
 give a just Form to the Narration ; to
 connect

connect concurrent Circumstances ; to shew the Dependance of the Parts on each other, and in what Order they ought to stand : Or when being ignorant of the Character of the Passions, he cannot penetrate into the true Character of the Actors ; when he wants the Dexterity to unravel the casual Entanglements of perplexed Interests ; and sees not how contrary Tempers operate on each other, and what Consequences they produce. These are the *Judices* that direct us in our Way, meet our Enquiries, and make our Travels in History pleasant and expeditious. But these being wanting or misplaced, we are presently involved in Error, we grope our Way in the dark, we quarrel with our *Guide*, and at length terminate our Ramblings in a Bog.

To the Purpose. When I read in *Suetonius* the monstrous Debaucheries of *Tiberius*, the infernal Cruelty of *Nero*, and the brutish Supineness of *Claudius*, ranged under the distinct Heads of Chapter and common Place, without

Order of Time, Probability of Circumstance, or the opposite Marks of growing Degeneracy ; nothing appears more averse to our natural Conceptions, to Truth or Likelihood. And yet these very miscreated Passions, when dissected by the skilful Hand of *Tacitus*, and the various Humours and Sources of the purulent Matter traced out and described, stand free of all Suspicion, and easily reconcile themselves to our Belief.

OUR Author's Reasoning then when disinvolved, and drawn out into Syllogism, discovers all the Justness of Proportion, and stands thus.

1. WHERE the Readers make a wrong Judgment, the Historian misses his End. (Which is Information).

BUT they will make a wrong Judgment (as we have proved above) where the Story is not wrote up in the Manner we described.

THERE

T H E R E F O R E where it is not so wrote up, the Historian misses his End.

2. **T O** miss his End argues the grossest Imperfection.

B U T (in the above Instance) this End is missed.

T H E R E F O R E such a Work is grossly imperfect.

3. **I T** is necessary for a Writer to remove gross Imperfections.

B U T this is a gross Imperfection.

T H E R E F O R E it is necessary to remove this.

4. **T O** remove it is very difficult, (as we sufficiently prove where we describe above, the Manner of forming the Narration.)

B U T it is necessary to remove it.

THEREFORE to write without this Imperfection (from whence arises the Readers perverse Judgment) is difficult. — The Thing to be proved.

HERE you see the Argument in full Force; but our Author's professed Brevity wou'd not permit him to stay and unfold it. He contents himself with asserting the Proposition, just touches upon the Minor of the first Syllogism, and leaves it to his Readers to find out his intermediate Proofs, and supply his imperfect Ratiocination. If this proves a true Solution of the Difficulty, I shan't be much disturbed at the Charge of Pedantry, in the Conclusion. On the whole then these Two Things may be observed. *First*, that *Sallust* has not only really and truly given *Two* Reasons for the Difficulty of writing History, but has been so exact and methodical as to chuse the two principal general ones, of *Stile* and *Matter*, under which all the other Difficulties, like Species under their Genius, are comprised. An
Instance

Instance of our Author's correct Judgment hitherto unobserved. *Secondly*, that a Writer who saw so well the Necessity of an artful Disposition of his Work, who knew so well how to perform it, who was above stealing the Applause of his Reader, and therefore used all his Endeavours fairly to obtain it, would never run into the beggarly Relief of *supernatural Relations*; which was the Thing I promised to demonstrate.

BUT the Obscurity of this Passage, which has cost us so much Time to break thro', was occasioned, as we said, by his affected Brevity; which will sometimes unavoidably occasion it; tho' for the most Part it must be owned his Brevity is attended with the greatest Perspicuity. Where, by-the-Bye, we may observe the injudicious Choice *Tacitus* made in imitating the *Sallustian* Brevity. *Sallust* indeed being sententious, and resolving every Thing into the Effects of natural Temper and Disposition, as copying from the ancient
Greek

Greek Philosophers, especially *Isocrates*, Brevity admirably becomes him ; but *Tacitus* is of a very different Genius, speculative and abstracted, and for refining upon every Thing, and consequently that Brevity which in the first is natural and easy, in him must be obscure and unintelligible. And yet we have *here* an Instance of this Fault in *Sallust* himself. Another remarkable one, is worthy our Notice, and the rather because the Commentators, as usual in a Case of real Difficulty, pass it over in most profound Silence. In describing the corrupted State of *Rome*, (n) he says, *Igitur primo pecuniæ, dein imperii cupido crevit* ; and yet not above half a dozen Lines after we read, *Sed primo magis ambitio, quam avaritia, animos hominum exercebat*. Was there ever a more express Contradiction ? Is it not so in Terms ? But on the other Hand, can we believe any Thing so gross cou'd have escaped *Sallust* ?

(n) *Introd. in Bell. Catil.*

This wou'd require Examination. I have considered it, and perhaps have not been unhappy in my Endeavours to reconcile it. *Sallust*, in the first Sentence, must be understood as speaking of the Vices of *Avarice* and *Ambition* in single Persons, independant of national Manners or Corruptions ; and in the latter Sentence, of these Vices in the collective Body of the State. What I am going to observe, will both confirm and explain this Interpretation. In *Rome* we find there was no Attempt made at a Power inconsistent with the Freedom of the State, till immense Wealth, in the Hands of private Persons, made the Way to it.

BUT the *Asian* Riches soon corrupted their Allegiance. Witness *Crassus*, one of the first Triumvirate. But consider *Rome* collectively, and we shall find, in the Nature of Things, *Ambition* must have the Start. For that Vice having something brave, and not unlike Virtue in its Composition, a single Example wou'd make it fashionable ;
while

while *Avarice*, bearing its own Ignominy in Front, cou'd not in a small Time become infectious. She cou'd but serve in the Rear of Ambition, and provide for the other's Expences; as we see in *Sylla* and *Catiline*.

BUT tho' in this last Instance we have shewn that Brevity has caused Obscurity in our Author, I must be so ingenuous to confess, that is not the only Cause of it in the above Passage, *concerning the People's Judgment*. There is another, and it is this. *Sallust* very studiously followed the *Greek* Writers, as we observed above, even to the translating their moral Sentences, and political Maxims. The Reflections here *on the People's Judgment*, are literally transcribed from *Thucidides* (o). But the two Historians being upon very different Subjects, that Thought, which in the *Greek* was natural and intelligible, is forced and obscure in the *Roman*,

(o) *In fun. orat. Periclis, l. 2.*

who has taken it into a very foreign Combination. This we know is one of the most general Causes of Obscurity in Writers, and happens more frequently than we are aware of. 'Tis certain our Author, with all his great Ability, is sometimes not the most happy in managing these Materials; which I cou'd shew at large, wou'd it not call me too far away from my main Purpose. However I can't finish my Dissertation on this Passage, without considering one Part of it in a different View from what we have yet done. *Quæ delicta reprehenderis malevolentia & invidia dicta putant*, says Sallust of the People. But on the same Occasion Tacitus observes the direct contrary, *Obtrectatio & livor pronis auribus accipiuntur* (p). Whence arose this Change of Judgment? whence, but from the Change of civil Policy? The first wrote under the Consular, and the other under the Monarchic State. In the

(p) Lib. i. Hist. init.

Consular Times, the most unbounded Liberty of Speech against Particulars, was indulged and encouraged; it was esteemed a good Barrier against the In-
 croachments of the Great; and so inseparable from a free People, that *Tacitus* makes the Recovery of this Right under *Trajan* the Proof of their Felicity (q). Now, where Indulgence of Speech was so liberally allowed, a malign Disposition wou'd be enough encouraged; and when an Historian was seen to make the utmost Use of his Power, no wonder if the *People* were inclined to put it to the Score of a base and envious Insult. But when with Extinction of Liberty, Freedom of Speech, the brightest of its Emanations, was no more; to dare then to assert the old Republican Privilege, and bring great Offenders back to the Judgment of the People, looked brave and gallant, and carried in it, as *Tacitus* admirably expresses it, *Falsa species Li-*

(q) *Ibid.*

bertatis; which in Times that cou'd neither bear a thorough Slavery, nor perfect Liberty, wonderfully recommended to Acceptance and Esteem.

BUT by this Time, I know my Reader will grow impatient to question me on the whole, and bring me back again to the Point, by such like Demands,

I. *Are we then to condemn, as fabulous and chimerical, all we meet with in prophane History of Prodigies and Miracles?* By no Means. The Interposition of *Providence* in human Affairs has all the Marks of Truth, that such a Thing is capable of. As, 1st, *Universal Consent* in Testimony, and Opinion; and however sceptical and idle Wits may have laboured to render doubtful *general attested Facts*, by I know not what sophistical Distinctions and Dilemmas; and to perplex the plain and easy Proof of *universal Consent* by speculative Niceties: I am persuaded all sober Enquirers after Truth, and unprejudiced Thinkers, will stand

M firm

firm upon this old beaten Ground of Certainty. 2dly, We may collect from Reason another Proof of this momentous Truth. The ordinary Dispensations of Providence are dark and perplexing, and have ever wore a double Face ; from which, with equal Force, may be drawn contrary Conclusions, according to the Humour or Interest of the Contemplator. For if on the one Hand the *Sanguine* sees in it the smiling Promises of a future Recompence, by an exact Adjustment of a long unbalanced Account ; to the *Timorous* appears nothing but the repeated Frowns of a total Neglect and Disregard. Now a miraculous Interposition in Favour of the common Principles of Morality and Religion, (and on no less Account ought we to presume of that Favour; this, I say,) fixes the *Features*, and leaves no Room for an ambiguous Meaning. This is one of the great moral Instructions held out to us in the Book of *Job*. After the busy Wit of Man had spent all its Stock, in raising Objections, and removing them, in accusing and ab-

solving,

solving, and was now become deeper
 and deeper intangled in inextricable
 Difficulties; at length the Voice of God
 was heard in the *Whirlwind*, which
 immediately set all to rights. But
 how? Exactly to this Reasoning. He
 vindicates his Providence, by the sole
 Display of his Power; the proper
 Work of Miracles. But some, who
 have not the utmost Reverence for Re-
 ligion, have given Miracles the derogat-
 ing Definition of *an Arrest and Dis-*
turbance to the Laws of Nature. Ac-
 cording to these Men there is Harmony,
 Concord and Proportion in theordi-
 nary Dispensations of Providence; and
 nothing but Irregularity and Confusion
 in the Extraordinary. Whereas, in
 Truth, this latter is the giving new
 Laws to those Portions of Matter with-
 in the Sphere of the Miracle, which
 carry with them the equal Marks of
 stupendous Wisdom and Power. But
 3dly, from the Miracles related in sa-
 cred Story, we may draw a more cer-
 tain Inference, than from either of the
 two former Heads; and when joined.

to them, the three add Strength to one another. For *this* last confirms a Believer in the two-preceding ; and *those* will help to remove an Infidel's Prejudices against the latter.

II. ARE *then true Miracles to have no Place in civil History* ? Surely the most honourable : But here the Historian will have Occasion for all his Art. First to separate Truth from Falshood, and then to distinguish between one kind of Truth and another ; unless he has this discerning Spirit, his Conduct here will be weak and extravagant. First he is to take Care the Miracles he relates be true ones ; where he is to begin his Disquisition, by considering the *End* for which a Miracle is reported to be wrote. If, on Examination, he finds nothing but a private Interest, a religious Sect, or civil Party concerned in its Truth ; he may here drop his Enquiry, and rest satisfied, that it is only the Game of Craft or Bigottry. But if he finds the End to be the Defence of the common Principles of Morality and Religion,

let

let him go on ; he has sufficient Reason to pursue his Enquiry, and whether he finds it Fact or no, he has the Satisfaction to reflect, that this is an *End worthy*, at least, of divine Interposition. But if undoubted Testimony proves some extraordinary Event, he is then carefully to examine, whether it was truly Miraculous : If, for Instance, human Affairs take some great and unexpected Turn, regularly conducted, and without the adequate Assistance of human Means ; or if there be a real Change in a Catholic Law of Nature, in which he is to take special Heed that the one does not prove such a Matter as is usually called a *Judgment*, or the other, *merely an unusual Phenomenon* : For if so, he here takes his Leave, and consigns one over to the *Old Women*, and the other to the *Virtuosi* ; otherwise he betrays his Presumption, and his Ignorance. So far is necessary for the Separation of Truth from Falshood : but this is not enough ; he is to consider next, whether it be such a Truth as the Public is concerned in. Let a

Miracle have all the other Conditions of a true one, yet if it have not this, that the Community is interested, either when it is a Denunciation of impending Judgments, for national Immoralities ; or an Espousal of the Right, against Injustice, Usurpation, or Tyranny ; it belongs properly to the Divine, and is out of the Cognizance of the Historian. These are the two Conditions, upon which only, these Relations can be admitted into History.

III. BUT Lastly, *Are false Miracles never to be admitted into just Compositions ?* Yes, even for these, there is a Time when the Laws of History can find a Place. And that is, when the Belief of them so influences public Actions as to alter or determine the Councils of a Leader, or a People. Then the *Miraculous*, not for its own Sake, but as it contributes to illustrate the Story, must, according to the Laws of History, which require a complete Enumeration of all the Springs and Motives of Action, be distinctly told in every

every of its Circumstances. Here *Plutarch* and *Dio Cassius*, who are never out upon the hot Scent of *Prodigies*, furnish us with a proper Example of this Precept. They relate, (r) that while *Cicero*, drawn one Way by his Timidity and Clemency, and another, by his Love of Glory and his Country, was under all the Anxiety of Irresolution, about the Fate of *Lentulus*, and his Companions ; there came a Message from his Wife *Terentia* (who had all along instigated him against the Conspirators) to acquaint him, that while she and her Women were assisting at an annual Sacrifice to the Goddess *Bona*, there issued from the extinguished Ashes, that lay upon the Altar, a bright and mighty Flame, which the Vestal Virgins, there present, assured her, portended a Length of Glory and Security to the Consul. This at once turned the Scales, and Justice preponderated.

(r) *Plutarch in vita Cic. & D. Cassius. Hist. l. 37.*

Now was it true that *Tully* was actuated by these Impressions, so momentous in their Consequences, nothing can excuse *Sallust*, (in his Omission of this Story) from the Neglect of a principal Law of History. And if we consider *Terentia*'s Spirit, which was daring and subtle, and her Husband's, vain and superstitious (from the Conjunction of which Tempers, most of the bastard Miracles, father'd upon abused Nature, have proceeded) we have no Reason to suspect its Truth. Must not we say then that *Sallust* has here given an Instance of that common Weakness of our Nature, that betrays us into an unsuspected Fault, while we endeavour to avoid its Opposite?

(f) Thus have I given an enlarged SPECIMEN of a SET of DISCOURSES I have now by me, on this great Historian.

(f) Indeed to have compleated this *Specimen* of my Thoughts on the *Advancement* of this Part of Literature, I shou'd have thrown together some Thoughts

Historian. Perhaps, those *few* who know how to make a right Use of History, and the wise Reflections of the Ancients,

Thoughts upon Translation, into the modern Languages ; one of the best Means of making those Ancients more generally useful, as it is my Project in the preceding Discourses to make them more rationally so. But I leave that to some abler Hand. Only this I can't but observe, that our *French* Neighbours have evinced their superior Taste in elegant and numerous Translations of the best Part of Classical Antiquity : While we, the servile Copiers of their Follies, have patiently suffer'd this useful Part of Learning to be prophaned by ignorant and mercenary Undertakers. But the different Genius's of the two People are here seen very remarkably. The *Frenchman*, vigorous and enterprizing, is ambitious of Possession ; while we, with a false Modesty and Coldness, natural from our Climate, content ourselves with a distant Admiration. This Neglect is the more inexcusable, as our Claim to this Province is juster, our Advantages greater, and our Invitations stronger than those of our polite Rivals. For to whom do those great Originals of Freedom and Virtue so justly belong, as to *Great-Britain*, the Protector of Liberty and Light of Religion ? Nor want we a Language that is brief, comprehensive, nervous and majestic.

For

Ancients, may find their Account in what I now present to them. For the *rest*, I won't disturb their Satisfaction in those borrowed Scraps and Rhapsodies that bear the specious Titles of REFLECTIONS, DISSERTATIONS, INTRO-

For Languages always take their Characters from the Genius of a People. So that two the most distant States, thinking and acting with the same generous Love for Mankind, must needs have very near the *same Combinations of Ideas*. Now the want of this Conformity in two Languages makes the great Difficulty of fine Translation. And it is our Boast, that in this Conformity we approach the nearest to ancient *Greece* and *Italy*. Nor let any one wonder that our heterogeneous Language shou'd have these Advantages in translating from the *Latin*, which the *French* and *Italian* want, tho' the direct Descendants from that ancient Tongue : For if the Words *Virtus*, for Instance, and *Patria*, raise commonly far different Ideas in the Minds of those two People, from what *Virtus* and *Patria* did in a *Roman*, as I am sure they do ; what signifies the *Conformity* of Syllables and Letters ?

But there are a Set of Men who value less the refined Speculations of *Greece*, and the haughty Virtue of *Rome*, than the *Pallium* of

TRODUCTIONS, &c. TO and ON
THE CLASSICKS; which, after all,
amounts to little more than a Book-
seller's

of the one, and the *Toga* of the other. These
are possessed with a kind of specific Avarice for
Words. They tell us that

" *Their Stores are stamp'd, and in their Metal*
[bear

" *The Antique Shapes of Kings and Kefars*
[strange and rare.
Spencer.

And it is their Care to preserve them from be-
ing melted down for common and vulgar Uses :
For we are told that Words, tho' they be but
the *Counters* of the Wise, are the *Money* of
Fools. And so come the several Arts of weigh-
ing, washing, clipping, coining, or, in other
Words, of various *Readings, Glosses, Correçti-
ons, and Emendations*, that waste the anxious
Hours of these *Greek and Roman* Mint-masters.
When, give the Man of Sense his *Counters* me-
thodically ranged, that, by their Place and Dis-
position, he may regulate their Valûe, and he
is not sollicitous about the Metal or Impress;
well knowing that the largest Sum may be as
exactly calculated with Pieces of Wood or Cop-
per, as of Ivory or Silver.

But

seller's Advertisement, that such good Books are to be purchased. These are a beggarly kind of small Craft, that know no certain Course, but run about from Coast to Coast, just touch as they pass by, but take their Accounts of what is up Land, from those who pretend to have ventured further. These are the only Adventurers we have in *English* Criticism, and suit our vain and lazy Humour most exactly ; which wou'd know every Thing, and yet be at the Pains to examine nothing. But to expect great Discoveries from these, is the same as to hope new Worlds from the Sailor without Chart or Compass. Such are reserved for those who dare launch

But the *Grammarians*, that they may still amuse themselves in the barren Pleasure of *Greek* and *Roman* Sounds, care not, tho' the World want Blessings given to the Service of every Age and People, by the Beneficence of those great Originals. Whose Fate is not unlike that of some Islands which Travellers speak of in the new World, that produce the most delicious Groves of Orange and Lemon-Trees, only to afford a Shade to the *Monkeys* and *Crocodiles* beneath.

boldly

boldly out, and can skilfully conduct themselves, thro' the Immensity of general Knowledge.

As for these Home-spun Thoughts, all I have to say in their Recommendation is, that they are so. I had no Ambition for the Employment of pilfering Indexes, and common Places, to furnish out a taudry glaring Patchwork. The Republic of Letters is already overstocked with the Retailers of its Commodities, as well as the Civil, which, under the best Regulations, can never make any real Increase of the Stock. Their present Use is, that our Rulers may raise a Tax from the itinerant Pedlar; and the Bookseller, like the Receiver of stoll'n Goods, knows how to improve his Mystery, by the choice Pack of the sharpening *Garreteer*. But their great Increase always predicts the certain Decay of Trade and Learning.

BUT the late *Royal Institution for the Study of Modern History*, has gi-

N

ven

ven a new *Aera* to the Reign of the
Muses.

UNDER the Auspices of another
AUGUSTUS they shall regain their
old Honours, and be once again the
Favourites of Courts. Their Ill-habits
shall be reform'd, their Manners polish-
ed, and a Right Taste lastingly establish-
ed. For our *invincible Monarch*, after
his accomplished Toils of Empire, has
now got Time to respire, and to cast
his Eye upon the literary World ;
where the abject Condition of *British*
History, (which we have described a-
bove) caught his first Regard, and de-
termined him to this most effectual
Method to raise and ennoble it. 'Tis
surely then the Office of every one,
that bears a Relation to Letters, and is
zealous, as he ought, in any Capacity,
to distinguish his Duty to *the Father*
of his Country, to second his gracious
Intentions. It is my utmost Ambition
to have it believed, that this engaged
me in my present Labour. I imagined
a better Foundation could not be laid,
for

for the Advancement of *Modern History*, than in a right Intelligence of the *Ancient*. And it is Honour enough for me to be employed as an Under-Labourer, in clearing the Ground, and removing the Rubbish. This noble *Institution* must produce the Master-Builders, to give us that finished Body of *English History* so long wanted, and till now despaired of.

At least I have Reason to expect, that as the Successes of the *British Arms*, if we be provoked to employ them, will, without doubt, raise up amongst us a plentiful Harvest of Journalists and Historians, the foregoing Remarks may, perhaps, be of seasonable Use to direct them in the most nice Detours of the Story; *the true Causes of Things*. That they no longer make such bungling Work of it, as was scarce excusable in their monkish Ancestors, and ramble Abroad to the very Limits of the Universe, for Causes which are to be found much nearer Home, in the wise and steady Councils

of our victorious Sovereign, the Effects of which now opening to the World, will be a better Proof than any given in the preceding Discourse, of what great Things the human Mind alone is capable to perform ; which, misunderstood by the admiring Many, has made Men fly to PRODIGIES for Explanation, and give a *Guardian Deity* to accompany the *Hero*.

SUCH a Work alone wou'd be worth a *Royal Foundation* ; but this has already procured far more important Advantages. THE UNIVERSITY, conquered by repeated Acts of Sovereign Favour, is become *ambitious* of receiving them ; and with unfeigned Love and Gratitude *repeats* her numerous Obligations.

METHINKS I see her, like the mighty Eagle, renewing her *immortal Youth*, and purging her opening Sight at the unobstructed Beams of our benign Meridian *SUN* ; which some pretend

pretend to say had been dazled and abused by an inglorious pestilential METEOR ; while the ill-affected Birds of Night wou'd, with their envious Hootings, prognosticate a Length of Darkness and Decay.

The E N D.



N 3

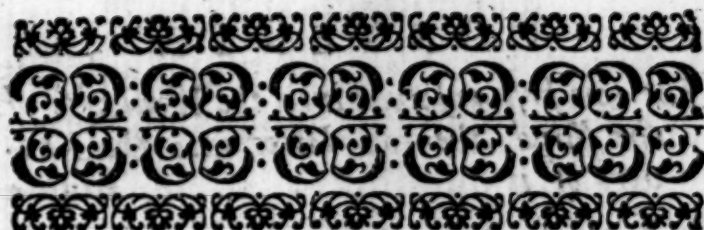
THE

1811

and in the year 1811
the following persons
were admitted into the
Society of Friends
in the year 1811
the following persons
were admitted into the
Society of Friends

THE END





THE
CONTENTS
OF THE
First PART.



ISTORY over-run with Prodigies, &c. Page I

Why it has not made equal Advances with the other Sciences, to free itself from Superstition 2

The Cause of this Evil hitherto assigned, proved insufficient 3

Besides that commonly assigned, four other principal Causes 4

The

CONTENTS.

<i>The two first resolved into the Weakness of the Mind, the two latter into the Knavery of it</i>	Page 4
<i>First Cause, That Weakness of the Mind that betrays us into the Love of Falshood</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>That Love kept up by Admiration</i>	7
<i>A Dissertation on Admiration, its Causes and Effects; its Influence on human Actions, illustrated in many Particulars</i>	12
<i>Second Cause, A National Pride</i>	22
<i>By such Men, Prodigies are thought to add Honour to the Country that is the Scene of them</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>This particularly observable in the Roman Writers</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>The Cure for this Evil oft worse than the Disease</i>	26
<i>An occasional Dissertation on the Fable of the Bees</i>	31
<i>The true Bounds of free Philosophizing marked out</i>	35
<i>Third Cause, The Knavery of the Writer, who takes Advantage of that general Weakness, so largely discoursed of under the first Cause</i>	37
<i>The Greek Writers here principally guilty</i>	38
<i>Most Historians, in some Instances or other, flatter the wrong Taste of the Reader</i>	39

CONTENTS:

<i>The French most remarkably in that specious Kind, called, The History of the Revolutions, &c.</i>	Page 42
<i>That Kind censured</i>	43
<i>Proved contrary to just Composition</i>	45
<i>Least instructive</i>	46
<i>And pernicious to genuine History.</i>	47
<i>Fourth Cause, The Writer's common Refuge to skreen his Ignorance of human Nature, and the Laws of good writing</i>	55
<i>The Modern Historians, and principally the English, concerned here</i>	56
<i>A Dissertation on the present State of English History</i>	59





CONTENTS.



THE CONTENTS OF THE

Second P A R T.

 General Censure of this false Taste	Page 67
 An Example of the true in Sal- lust, who is shewn to be entirely free from the Infection	68
To illustrate his Merit, the Age in which he wrote is considered	69
An Account is given of the Rise and Pro- gress of History in Rome	71
Sallust's Conduct in the History of Catiline's Conspiracy particularly examined	76
Shewn to be entirely free from this Supersti- tion, and highly rational	79
That it cou'd not be otherwise, from his Knowledge of human Nature, and the historic Art	81

The

CONTENTS.

<i>The Ignorance of which, the never-failing Source of these Errors</i>	Page 81
<i>A particular Examination, first of his Knowledge of human Nature, which is shewn from some Passages in his Introduction</i>	82
<i>Which occasions a Dissertation on the various Opinions of the Pagan World, concerning human Vicissitudes</i>	ibid.
<i>And of some Christian Philosophers</i>	90
<i>Their Absurdities exposed</i>	91
<i>Sallust's Notions on this Head most agreeable to right Reason and Revelation</i>	94
<i>An Affectation of St. Evremond censured.</i>	95
<i>Second, His great Skill in the Historic Art.</i>	99
<i>This shewn from another Passage in his Introduction to the Catiline Conspiracy</i>	ibid.
<i>Aulus Gellius's Explanation of this Passage examined and censured</i>	102
<i>The true Sense attempted to be given</i>	109
<i>Confessed to be obscure</i>	115
<i>The Causes of that Obscurity inquired into</i>	118
<i>An Enquiry.</i>	121
<i>First, Whether any of the Prodigies in prophane History are to be credited</i>	ibid.
<i>The Affirmative is asserted from Fact</i>	ibid.
<i>From Reason</i>	122
<i>From Analogy</i>	123
<i>Second, Whether true Miracles shou'd have a Place in Civil History</i>	124
	<i>Resolved</i>

CONTENTS.

<i>Resolved in the Affirmative</i>	Page 124
<i>But with great Caution and Restriction</i>	125
<i>The Means of discriminating true from false Miracles</i>	ibid.
<i>True Miracles of some kind only, to be ad- mitted into civil History</i>	126
<i>Third, Whether false Miracles are ever to have a Place there</i>	ibid.
<i>On what occasion even they are to be admit- ted</i>	ibid.
<i>An Example from Sallust, Plutarch, and Dio Cassius</i>	127
<i>The Conclusion</i>	128

F I N I S.

